

**A COMMENTARY
ON
ROMANS (KJV)**

Dr. John Gill D.D.

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PUBLISHERS DEDICATION

This reproduction of Dr John Gill's, 'Commentary on Romans', has been presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of Bishop William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of William and his co-inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot-Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

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David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse

Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

PUBLISHERS NOTE

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation; to the latter of which the greatest

deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

Authors Biography

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering , Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park

Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D.** (1600-1643).

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INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

Though this epistle is in order placed the first of the epistles, yet it was not first written: there were several epistles written before it, as the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, the first epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus: the reason why this epistle stands first, is either the excellency of it, of which Chrysostom had so great an esteem that he caused it to be read over to him twice a week; or else the dignity of the place, where the persons lived to whom it is written, being Rome, the imperial city: so the books of the prophets are not placed in the same order in which they were written: Hosea prophesied as early as Isaiah, if not earlier; and before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and yet stands after them. This epistle was written from Corinth, as the subscription of it testifies; and which may be confirmed from the apostle's commendation of Phoebe, by whom he sent it, who was of Cenchrea, a place near Corinth; by his calling Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, who abode at Corinth, 2Ti 4:20, and Gaius his host, who was a Corinthian, Ro 16:23 1Co 1:14, though at what time it was written from hence, is not so evident: some think it was written in the time of his three months' travel through Greece, Ac 20:2,3, a little before the death of the Emperor Claudius, in the year of Christ 55; others, that it was written by him in the short stay he made at Corinth, when he came thither, as is supposed, from Philippi, in his way to Troas, where some of his company went before, and had been there five days before him: and this is placed in the second year of Nero, and in the year of Christ 56; however, it was not written by him during his long stay at Corinth, when he was first there, but afterwards, even after he had preached from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum: and when he was about to go to Jerusalem, with the contributions of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to the poor saints there, Ro 15:19,25,26.

The persons to whom this epistle was sent were Roman saints, both Jews and Gentiles, inhabiting the city of Rome; of which city and church; see Gill on "Ac 28:14"; see Gill on "Ac 28:15"; by whom the Gospel was first preached at Rome, and who were the means of forming the church there, is not very evident Irenaeus, an ancient writer, says {a}, that Peter and Paul preached the Gospel at Rome, and founded the church; and Gaius, an ecclesiastical man, who lived in the time of Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, asserts the same; and Dionysius; bishop of the Corinthians, calls the Romans the plantation of Peter and Paul {b}: whether

Peter was ever at Rome is not a clear point with many; and certain it is, that the Apostle Paul had not been at Rome when he wrote this epistle, at least it seems very probable he had not, by several expressions in Ro 1:10-15; and yet here was a church to which he writes, and had been a considerable time; for their faith was spoken of throughout the world, Ro 1:8; and when the apostle was on the road to this city, the brethren in it met him, Ac 28:15. The chief design of this epistle is to set in a clear light the doctrine of justification: showing against the Gentiles, that it is not by the light of nature, and works done in obedience to that, and against the Jews, that it was not by the law of Moses, and the deeds of that; which he clearly evinces, by observing the sinful and wretched estate both of Jews and Gentiles: but that it is by the righteousness of Christ imputed through the grace of God, and received by faith; the effects of which are peace and joy in the soul, and holiness in the life and conversation: he gives an account of the justified ones, as that they are not without sin, which he illustrates by his own experience and case; and yet are possessed of various privileges, as freedom from condemnation, the blessing of adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; he treats in it concerning predestination, the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; and exhorts to the various duties incumbent on the saints, with respect to one another, and to the world, to duties of a moral and civil nature, and the use of things indifferent; and closes it with the salutations of divers persons.

{a} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 1. Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 8.

{b} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.

INTRODUCTION ROMANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, and salutation, the preface to it, and the grand proposition of justification by faith, so much enlarged on afterwards; and that this could not be by the law of nature, and the works of it among the Gentiles, is demonstrated by a detail of their horrible wickedness, impiety, and unrighteousness. In the inscription an account is given of the author of the epistle, who is described in Ro 1:1 by his name Paul: by his relation to Christ, a servant of his; and by his office, an apostle, whose business and concern were with the Gospel; to which he was separated. This Gospel is commended from the author of it, who is God himself; and from the antiquity of it, Ro 1:2,3, being as ancient as the writings

of the prophets; and from the subject of it, being the Lord Jesus Christ; who is described by his relation to God, his Son, by his dominion over the saints, their Lord, by both his natures, human and divine; his human nature, as being of the seed of David, his divine nature, being the Son of God, Ro 1:4, which is declared by the power he is possessed of, by the Spirit of holiness that is in him, by his resurrection from the dead, and by the apostles receiving from him grace to fit them for their office, and by the office itself: the end of which was to make some among all nations obedient to him, Ro 1:5, among whom were the saints at Rome, who were called by him, and after his name, Ro 1:6, which introduces the account of the persons to whom this epistle is written, who are described, Ro 1:7, by the place of their abode, Rome; by their interest in the love of God; and by the effect, fruit, and evidence of it, their effectual calling; and then follows the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, in which he wishes grace and peace for them, from God the Father, and from Christ. The preface begins Ro 1:8, in which are a thanksgiving to God, through Christ, for all the saints at Rome, particularly on account of their faith, for which they were everywhere so famous; an appeal to God, Ro 1:9, for the truth of his incessant prayers for them, and particularly, Ro 1:10, that this was a request he made, that if it was the will of God, he might have a speedy and prosperous journey to, them; an expression of strong affection to them, and of his great desire to see them, Ro 1:11, his end in which was partly for their sakes, to communicate spiritual things to them for their establishment, and partly for his own comfort, and the increase of the mutual faith of both, Ro 1:12, also a vindication of himself, Ro 1:13, showing, that it was not any fault of his, or any neglect of them by him, that he had not been with them as yet, but some things hindered him, in the execution of his purpose to come to them; to which he was moved, partly by the hope of having fruit among them, as among others, and partly through the obligation that lay upon him by virtue of his office, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men, Ro 1:14, he expresses his willingness and readiness to preach the Gospel to them at Rome, as soon as an opportunity would offer, Ro 1:15, which was his work and office, what he delighted in, was closely attached to, and by no means ashamed of, Ro 1:16, partly because of the nature of it, it was the Gospel, good news and true: and partly because of the author and subject of it, Christ; as also because of the efficacy of it in the salvation of Jews and Gentiles; and likewise because of a principal doctrine revealed

in it, Ro 1:17, the doctrine of justification by faith, in the righteousness of Christ, confirmed and illustrated by a passage out of Hab 2:4, and which he particularly mentions, because he intended to dwell upon it in this epistle: and in order to show that the Gentiles could not be justified in the sight of God by their obedience to the law, and the light of nature, he observes, that they were the objects of the wrath of God, Ro 1:18, and that very justly, because they sinned knowingly; they had some knowledge of the truth, but they would not profess it: and that they had such knowledge of it, he proves from the author of it, God, who showed it to them, Ro 1:19, and from the means of it, by which they must, and did arrive to some degree of it, namely, the works of creation, Ro 1:20. The apostle goes on to expose the ingratitude of them, the vanity of their minds, the pride and folly of their hearts, Ro 1:21,22, the gross idolatry they were guilty of, Ro 1:23, for which idolatry they were given up to their own hearts' lusts, to commit the foulest and most scandalous iniquities, even to commit sodomitical practices, and unnatural lusts, both men and women, Ro 1:24-28. And so far were they from having a righteousness to justify them before God, that they were titled with all unrighteousness; and a large list of the vilest sins, being committed by them, is given; and a catalogue of the worst of sinners, as among them, Ro 1:29-32. All which are aggravated by their knowledge of the will of God, through the light of nature, that these things were contrary to it, and were deserving of death; and yet they both did them, and were delighted with those that committed them also: the inference which he leaves to be deduced from hence, and which may easily be deduced, is, that therefore there can be no justification of such persons in the sight of God by their own works.

ROMANS CHAPTER 1

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

COMMNTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 1

Romans 1:1

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ

The name of the author of this epistle is Paul, who formerly was called Saul. Some think his name was changed upon his own conversion; others, upon the conversion of the Roman deputy Sergius Paulus, (Acts 13:7 Acts 13:9) ; others, that he was so called from the littleness of his stature; but rather it should seem that he had two names, which was usual with the Jews; one by which they went among the Gentiles, and another by they were called in their own land; (See Gill on Acts 13:9). "A servant of Jesus Christ"; not a servant of sin, nor of Satan, nor of man, nor of Moses and his law, nor of the traditions of the elders, but of Jesus Christ; and not by creation only, but by redemption, and by powerful efficacious grace in conversion; which is no ways contrary to true liberty; nor a disgraceful, but a most honourable character; and which chiefly regards him as a minister of the Gospel:

called to be an apostle:

an apostle was one that was immediately sent by Christ, and had his authority and doctrine directly from him, and had a power of working miracles from him, in confirmation of the truth of his mission, authority, and doctrine; all which were to be found in the author of this epistle, who did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour to himself, of which he always judged himself unworthy, but was "called" to it according to the will, and by the grace of God:

separated unto the Gospel of God.

This may regard either God's eternal purpose concerning him, his preordination of him from eternity to be a preacher of the Gospel, to which he was separated from his mother's womb, (Galatians 1:15) ; or the separation of him to that work made by the order of the Spirit of God, (Acts 13:2) . The phrase used is either in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were separated from their brethren the children of Israel, to their sacred employments; or rather to the apostle's having been (vwrp) , "a Pharisee", which signifies "one separated", as he was now; only with this difference, before he was separated to the law, but now "to the Gospel", to preach and defend it, which he did with all faithfulness and integrity; the excellency of which Gospel is signified by its being called "the Gospel of God": he is the author of it; his grace is the subject of it; and he it is who commits it to men, qualifies them for the preaching of it, and succeeds them in it.

Romans 1:2

Which he had promised afore

The Gospel is here further commended from the antiquity it: it was no novel doctrine, an upstart notion, but what God had conceived in his own breast from eternity. This mystery was hid in him from the beginning of the world, and was ordained before the world was; in time God was pleased to make it known to the sons of men; he "promised" it, he spoke of it, and declared it

by his prophets,

Isaiah and others, "afore" the Apostle Paul was called forth to be a preacher of it; which promise, or promises of it, lie

in the Holy Scriptures;

the books of the Old Testament, so called from the author, matter, and usefulness of them. The apostle speaks in the language of his nation, for the Jews

frequently call the Bible, writings, Holy Ones; "for", say they, (כל כהובים קדש) , "all the Scriptures are holy" F3, and style them, (כתבי הקדש) , "Scriptures of holiness", or holy Scriptures F4.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Misn. Yadaim, c. 3. sect. 5.

F4 Misn. Parah, c. 10. sect. 3. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 116. 2.

Romans 1:3

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord

These words are in connection with "the Gospel of God", (Romans 1:1) , and express the subject matter of it, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord; for Christ, as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the only Mediator between God and men, who is Lord both of the dead and living, is the sum and substance of the Gospel: he is here described by his relation to God, his Son, of the same nature with him, equal to him, and distinct from him; by his usual names, "Jesus Christ", the one signifying a "Saviour", the other "anointed", and both, that he was anointed of God to be the Saviour of his people; and by his dominion over the saints our Lord, not merely by creation, but by redemption and grace, and happy is the person that can claim interest in him, as is here done; and by the distinction of natures in him:

which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

this respects Christ in his human nature, who was made flesh, and of a woman; and shows his existence before his incarnation, and the immediate power and hand of God in it; and which was done, not by transmutation of him into flesh, but by an assumption of human nature into union with his divine person: he is said to be made "of the seed of David"; this points out the family from whence he sprung; designs the posterity of David, particularly Mary; has regard to the promise made to David, which God fulfilled; and shows the royal descent of Christ: it is added, "according to the flesh"; that is, according to his human nature; which phrase does not denote the corruption, but the truth of that nature; and supposes that he had another nature, otherwise there would have been no need of this limiting and restrictive clause.

Romans 1:4

And declared to be the Son of God

Not made as he is said to be before, when his

incarnation is spoken of; nor did he begin to be the Son of God, when he was made of the seed of David, but he, the Son of God, who existed as such, from everlasting, was manifested in the flesh, or human nature: and this his divine sonship, and proper deity, are declared and made evident,

with,
or “by”

[his] power;

which has appeared in the creation of all things out of nothing; in upholding all things in their beings; in the government of the world, and works of Providence; in the miracles he wrought; in his performing the great work of redemption; in the success of his Gospel, to the conversion of sinners; and in the preservation of his churches and people: here it seems chiefly to regard the power of Christ in raising the dead, since it follows, and which is to be connected with this clause,

by the resurrection from the dead;

and designs either the resurrection of others, as of Lazarus, and some other persons, in his lifetime, and of some at his resurrection, and of all at the last day: or the resurrection of his own body, which dying he had power to raise up again, and did; and which declared him to be, or clearly made it appear that he was the Son of God, a divine person, truly and properly God: and this was done

according to the Spirit of holiness;

which may be understood of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, who is holy in himself, and the author of holiness in the saints; and who is the declarer of Christ's sonship, partly by bearing a testimony to it in the word, and in the hearts of believers, and chiefly by being concerned in the resurrection of the body of Christ from the dead; or else by the Spirit of holiness may be meant the divine nature of Christ, which, as it is holy, so by it Christ offered himself to God, and by it was quickened, or made alive, when he had been put to death in the flesh; and which must be a clear and strong proof of his being truly the Son of God.

Romans 1:5

By whom we have received grace and apostleship

That is, either by the Holy Spirit, from whom all grace and gifts come, qualifying for the discharge of any office; or by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is full of grace

and truth, has received gifts for, and gives them to men to fit them for whatsoever service he is pleased to call them to. By “grace and apostleship” may be meant, either one and the same thing, the favour and honour of being the apostles of Christ; or different things, and the one in order to the other. Grace may design special saving grace in calling, justification, pardon, and adoption, and sanctification, which was received in common with other saints, and is absolutely necessary to an apostle, and to any ordinary minister of the word; or the doctrine of grace, which they received from Christ, and dispensed to others; or rather the gifts of grace, and the various measures thereof, which they received from their ascended Lord and King, by which they were furnished for apostleship, that is, the work and office of apostles; to which they were called by Christ, and from whom they received a commission to execute it. The apostle takes in others sides himself, and says, “we have received”; partly for the sake of modesty, and partly to keep up his equal title with others to this office; and since this is had in a way of receiving, which supposes giving, and excludes boasting, it obliges to make use of all grace and gifts to the glory of Christ, by whom they are received. The end for which they received such an office, and grace to fit them for it, was, “for obedience to the faith”; that men might be brought by the ministry of the word to obey the faith, Christ the object of faith; to submit to his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him, and to be subject to his ordinances or to obey the doctrine of faith, which is not barely to hear it, and notionally receive it, but to embrace it heartily by faith, and retain it, in opposition to a disbelief and contempt of it; and which is the end and design of the Gospel ministration to bring persons to, Moreover, by

obedience to the faith,

or “obedience of faith”, as it may be rendered, may be meant the grace of faith, attended with evangelical obedience; for obedience, rightly performed, is only that which is by faith, and springs from it. Now grace and apostleship were received, in order to be exercised

among all nations;

not in Judea only, to which the first commission of apostleship was limited, but in all the nations of the world, as the commission renewed by Christ after his resurrection ordered; and that some among all nations of the earth might, by the power of divine grace accompanying the word, be brought to faith and

obedience: and all this, the qualifications for the office, the due exercise of it in all the world, and the success that attended it, were

for his name;

for the honour and glory of Christ, in whose name they went, and which they bore and carried among the Gentiles, out of whom he was pleased “to take a people for his name”, (Acts 15:14) .

Romans 1:6

Among whom are ye also

The Romans, though they were the chief, were among the nations of the world to whom the apostles were sent; and since Paul was called to be an apostle, and had, as others, grace and apostleship, and particularly the apostleship of the uncircumcision, or was ordained a teacher of the Gentiles, more especially he was an apostle to them, and as such was to be regarded by them. This seems to point out what they were originally; they were among all nations which lay in darkness; and were without Christ and hope, and God in the world; but now,

the called of Jesus Christ.

The calling here spoken of is not to an office, or a mere external one by the ministry of the word, but an internal special call by the grace of God; and which is irresistible, efficacious, and unchangeable, and is an high, holy, and heavenly one; by it persons are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, from the company of the men of it, and the sinful pleasures thereof, to fellowship with Christ and his saints, and off a dependence on themselves, and their own righteousness, to the grace and righteousness of Christ, and to eternal glory. The persons so called are the elect of God, who are secured in Christ, and redeemed by him, and who has a concern with the Father and Spirit in the calling of them: hence they are styled, “the called of Jesus Christ”; they are called by him, and after his name; he has an interest in them; as they were before his chosen and redeemed ones, they are now his called ones; as Jacob and Israel of old were named of God, (yarqm) , “my called”, (Isaiah 48:12) ; so these were named Christ's called ones; and who by calling came to be partakers of him and of his grace.

Romans 1:7

To all that be in Rome

These words contain both the inscription of the epistle, and the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, The inscription of it is not to the Roman emperor; nor to the Roman senate, nor to all the inhabitants in Rome; but to all the saints there, whether rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, Jew or Gentile, without any distinction, being all one in Christ Jesus: and these are described as

beloved of God;

not for any loveliness there was in them, nor because of any love in them to God, nor on account of their obedience and righteousness; but through the free favour and sovereign will and pleasure of God, who loved them before he called them, even from eternity, and will love them to eternity; which love of his is the source and spring of all the blessings of grace, and, among the rest, of the effectual calling; hence this character is set before the following one,

called [to be] saints;

not born so, nor become so through their own power, but were so by calling grace, as a fruit of everlasting love; men are first beloved of the Lord, and then called to be his saints. The salutation follows; the things wished for in it are,

grace to you, and peace:

by “grace” is not meant ministerial gifts, which are not common to all the saints; nor the Gospel, which was at Rome already; nor the love and favour of God, which these persons were sharers in, as appears from their above characters; nor the principle of grace, which was now formed there in their effectual calling; but an increase of grace, as to its degrees, acts, and exercise; every grace is imperfect in this respect, and those who have the most stand in need of more; there is such a thing as growing in grace, which is very desirable, and may be expected from God, who is able to make all grace to abound, and has promised to give more: by “peace” is meant, peace with God through Christ; peace in their own consciences, and with one another; all manner of prosperity inward and outward here, and eternal happiness hereafter. The persons from whom these are desired are,

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;

God the Father of Christ is spoken of as our Father, which is by adoption; partly to engage fear and reverence of him at his throne; and partly to encourage freedom and boldness there, and an expectation of

receiving every blessing of grace from him: “the Lord Jesus Christ” is mentioned, as being the person through whom, and for whose sake, all the blessings of grace and peace are communicated to us; and being put upon a level with the Father in these petitions, shows him to be equal with him, and so truly and properly God. “Grace” may be thought to be particularly wished for from the Father, though not exclusive of Christ, since he is the God of all grace, who has treasured up a fulness of it in his Son. And “peace” may be considered as desired to be had from Christ, though not exclusive of the Father; since the covenant of peace was made with him, the chastisement of peace was laid on him, and he has made peace by the blood of his cross, and is the giver of it to his people.

Romans 1:8

First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all,

&c.] After the inscription and salutation, follows a thanksgiving, which begins the epistle: it is usual with the apostle in all his epistles to make requests for the churches, with thanksgivings for mercies; his view in it was, to glorify God, to testify his affection to the saints, and to show that all they had must be referred to the grace of God. The object of thanksgiving is God not merely as a creator and preserver, but as a Father, the Father of Christ, and our Father in Christ; as the one God, and our God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The apostle styles him, my God; which distinguishes him from all others, points out his particular interest in him, expresses his knowledge of him and faith in him, and demonstrates that what he did now, he did in faith. The person through whom thanks are given is Jesus Christ. There is no coming to God but through Christ, nor is any sacrifice either of prayer or praise acceptable without him, and since all we have come through him, it is but reasonable that thanks for them should be returned by and through him; the persons for whom this thanksgiving is made were all the Romans, all the saints at Rome, the members of the church there, of whatsoever rank and degree, and in whatsoever, state and condition; the thing for which the apostle was thankful for particularly was, not that their city was mistress of the whole world, and their fame for power, wealth, and grandeur, was spread abroad far and near; but, says he,

that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole

world;

which shows that faith is a grace of great account: God has put an honour upon it, by making it the receiver of all his gifts, and that gives glory to God, and without it nothing is acceptable to him; it answers many excellent uses and purposes in experience; it is that by which saints live upon Christ in this world, and look to the glories of another. This also shows that the saints at Rome did not hide their faith in their breasts, but declared it to others; a public profession both of the grace and doctrine of faith is to be made, and constantly held; both are to be shown forth to others, by deeds as well as words; which greatly redounds to the honour of such churches, causes joy in other churches, and in all the ministers of the Gospel, and is the occasion of many thanksgivings to God.

Romans 1:9

For God is my witness, whom I serve

These words are an appeal to God, and carry in them the nature and form of an oath; the reason of the apostle’s using it was, because he was personally unknown to the Romans, and they to him, and so might doubt of his affectionate regard unto them; and therefore for the confirmation thereof he uses it: this was a case which was only known to God and himself, and hence he appeals to him for the truth of it. The object of his oath or appeal, or by which he speaks, is not himself, or anything that belonged to him, nor any creature in heaven or on earth, but God; who in a solemn oath is only to be appealed to and sworn by: he describes him as the God “whom [he] served”, to distinguish him from all false gods, and to show that he that takes an oath, should be one that fears and serves the Lord; what he served him in was not the law, but

the Gospel of his Son;

Jesus Christ, who is the author, minister, and subject matter of it: he served him in it, by preaching, spreading, and defending it. This is a service, and a very laborious one, and makes for the honour and glory of God. The manner in which he served him was, as he says,

with my Spirit;

either with the Spirit of God, which was given to him; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews; internally, in opposition to bodily exercise only, and voluntarily, with his whole heart, soul, and spirit. The matter or substance of his appeal

or oath was,

that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

whence may be observed, that prayer to God ought to be constant; and that we should be concerned for others as well as for ourselves; all the saints should share therein.

Romans 1:10

Making request, if by any means now at length

A principal thing, which he incessantly and importunately requested at the throne of grace, was, that he might have an opportunity of coming to them; that God in his providence would open a way for him; and that he might have a safe and comfortable journey in a very little time; all which he submits to the will of God, as a good man ought to do; and which he thus expresses,

I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God, to come unto you;

see (James 4:13 James 4:14).

Romans 1:11

For I long to see you

Not the city of Rome, which was one of Austin’s three wishes to have seen in its glory; nor the emperor of it, nor the senate in it, nor its populous inhabitants, fine buildings, riches and grandeur; but the poor saints there, which were the excellent men of the earth, of the whole Roman empire, and in whom was his delight: his desire to see them was not to gratify his curiosity, nor to spend his time in idle chat with them, nor with a view to enrich himself by them; but, says he,

that I may impart some spiritual gift:

not any extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but spiritual light, knowledge, peace, and comfort, through the exercise of his ministerial gift: whence it may be observed, that that which qualifies men for the preaching of the word to the profit of others, is a gift, a gift by grace; a spiritual one, which comes from the Spirit of God, and may be, and is to be imparted to others in the free use and exercise of it; and that,

to the end that saints may be established;

for such who are called by grace, need establishing. They are indeed in a safe state and condition; they are encircled in the arms of everlasting love, they are fixed in

the hands of Christ, secured in an everlasting covenant, established on the rock of ages, and settled in a state from whence they can never fall: yet, notwithstanding this, they are sometimes very unstable in their hearts, in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, and in professing and adhering to the doctrines of the Gospel; wherefore they need establishing, as to a more firm persuasion of interest in the love of God, and in the covenant of grace, as to a more stable exercise of grace in Christ, and as to a more constant discharge of duty, and steady profession of adherence to the truths of the Gospel; to all which the ministration of the word has a tendency, with a divine blessing.

Romans 1:12

That is, that I may be comforted together with you

This is a further explanation of his view, in being desirous of coming to them, and preaching: the Gospel among them; for what makes for establishment, makes for comfort; and what makes for comfort, makes for establishment; and when souls are established, ministers are comforted as well as they; and whilst ministers are imparting their spiritual gifts for the use of others, they themselves are sometimes comforted of God in their work, and particularly when they find there is an agreement between their doctrine, and the experience of the saints:

by the mutual faith both of you and me.

The grace of faith is the same in all the saints, and so is the doctrine of it, as dispensed by Christ’s faithful ministers, and experimentally received and embraced by his people; the consideration of which has a very great influence on the comfort and establishment of each other; nor are any so perfect, but they may receive benefit from others, even though inferior to them.

Romans 1:13

Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren

The apostle calls them brethren, because many of them were Jews, his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, and all of them were his brethren in a spiritual relation; and this he does to express his affection to them, and engage their attention and credit to him, and particularly to this matter which he now acquaints them with, being unwilling they should be ignorant of it;

that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you:

it was not a sudden start of mind, or a desire that

lately arose up in him, but a settled resolution and determination, and which he had often made:

but was let hitherto;

either by God, who had work for him to do in other places; or by Satan, who sometimes by divine permission has had such power and influence; see (1 Thessalonians 2:18) , or through the urgent necessities of other churches, which required his stay with them longer than he intended: his end in taking up at several times such a resolution of coming to them was, says he,

that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles:

by fruit he means, not any reward of his labour, either temporal or eternal; but the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, and the fruitfulness of believers in grace and works. The apostle seems to allude to the casting of seed into the earth: Christ's ministers' are husbandmen, who sow the seed of the word, which lies some time under the clods; wherefore patience is necessary to wait its springing up, first in the blade, and then in the ear, then in the full corn in the ear, when it brings forth fruit; all which depend on the blessing of God: and when he adds, "as among other Gentiles", his design is not so much to let them know that they were as other Gentiles, upon a level with them, had no pre-eminence as citizens of Rome, over other saints, being all one in Christ Jesus; as to observe to them his success in other places, where he had been preaching the Gospel of the grace of God.

Romans 1:14

I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians,

&c.] The meaning is, that he was obliged by the call he had from God, the injunction that was laid upon him by him, and the gifts with which he was qualified, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men; who are here distinguished into Greeks and Barbarians: sometimes by Greeks are meant the Gentiles in general, in opposition to the Jews; see (Romans 1:16) ; but here they design only a part of the Gentiles, the inhabitants of Greece, in opposition to all the world besides; for the Greeks used to call all others that were not of themselves Barbarians {e}: or else by Greeks are meant the more cultivated nations of the world, and by Barbarians the ruder and more uncivil parts of it; to which agrees the next division of mankind,

both to the wise and to the unwise.

The Gospel was to be preached "to the wise"; such who thought themselves to be so, and were so with respect to human wisdom and knowledge; though it should be despised by them, as it was, and though few of them were called by it, some were, and still are, though not many; and such wisdom there is in the Gospel, as the wisest of men may learn by it, will be entertaining to them, is far beyond their contempt, and what will serve to exercise their talents and abilities, to search into the knowledge of, and rightly to understand; and it must be preached "to the unwise"; for such God has chosen to confound the wise; these he calls by his grace, and reveals his Gospel to, whilst he hides it from the wise and prudent; and there is that in the Gospel which is plain and easy to the weakest mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Cornel. Nepos, l. 1. c. 2, 7. & 2, 3. & 3. 6. & 4. 1. & passim. Quint. Curtius, l. 3. c. 4, 7. & 6. 5. & passim.

Romans 1:15

So, as much as in me is, I am ready

This explains what he was a debtor to one and another for, namely,

to preach the Gospel;

expresses the readiness of his mind to that work, whatever difficulties lay in his way; and declares what a willing mind he had to preach it also to the Romans, as elsewhere:

to you that are at Rome also;

the metropolis of the Roman empire, a very public place, the seat of Satan, and where was the heat of persecution.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

The reason why he was so ready and willing to preach it, even where he ran the greatest risk of his character and life, was, because it was "the Gospel of Christ" he preached, and he was not ashamed of it. This supposes that some were, though the apostle was not, ashamed of the Gospel; as all such are who hide and conceal it, who have abilities to preach it, and do not: or who preach, but not the Gospel; or who preach the Gospel only in part, who own that in private, they will not preach in public,

and use ambiguous words, of doubtful signification, to cover themselves; who blend the Gospel with their own inventions, seek to please men, and live upon popular applause, regard their own interest, and not Christ's, and cannot bear the reproach of his Gospel. It expresses, that the apostle was not ashamed of it; that is, to preach it, which he did fully and faithfully, plainly and consistently, openly and publicly, and boldly, in the face of all opposition: and it designs more than is expressed, as that he had the utmost value for it, and esteemed it his highest honour that he was employed in preaching it: his reasons for this were, because it was "the Gospel of Christ"; which Christ himself preached, which he had learnt by revelation from him, and of which he was the sum and substance: and because

it is the power of God;

not essentially, but declaratively; as the power of God is seen in making men ministers of it, in the doctrines held forth in it, in the manner in which it was spread in the world, in the opposition it met with, in the continuance and increase of it notwithstanding the power and cunning of men, and in the shortness of time, in which so much good was done by it in the several parts of the world: it is the power of God organically or instrumentally; as it is a means made use of by God in quickening dead sinners, enlightening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, softening hard hearts, and making of enemies friends; to which add, the manner in which all this is done, suddenly, secretly, effectually, and by love, and not force: the extent of this power is,

unto salvation;

the Gospel is a declaration and revelation of salvation by Christ, and is a means of directing and encouraging souls to lay hold upon it. The persons to whom it is so, are in general,

everyone that believeth:

this does not suppose that faith gives the Gospel its virtue and efficacy; but is only descriptive of the persons to whom the Gospel, attended with the power and grace of God, is eventually efficacious: and particularly it was so,

to the Jew first;

who as they had formerly the advantage of the Gentiles, much every way, through the peculiar privileges which were conferred on them; so the Gospel was first preached to them by Christ and his disciples; and even when it was ordered to be carried into the

Gentile world, it was to begin with them, and became effectual for the salvation of many of them:

and also to the Greek;

to the Gentile; for after the Jews had rejected it, as many being called by it as Jehovah thought fit, at that time, it was preached to the Gentiles with great success; which was the mystery hid from ages and generations past, but now made manifest.

Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed

By "the righteousness of God", is not meant the essential righteousness of God, the rectitude of his nature, his righteousness in fulfilling his promises, and his punitive justice, which though revealed in the Gospel, yet not peculiar to it; nor the righteousness by which Christ himself is righteous, either as God, or as Mediator; but that righteousness which he wrought out by obeying the precepts, and bearing the penalty of the law in the room of his people, and by which they are justified in the sight of God: and this is called "the righteousness of God", in opposition to the righteousness of men: and because it justifies men in the sight of God; and because of the concern which Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have in it. Jehovah the Father sent his Son to work it out, and being wrought out, he approves and accepts of it, and imputes it to his elect: Jehovah the Son is the author of it by his obedience and death; and Jehovah the Spirit discovers it to sinners, works faith in them to lay hold upon it, and pronounces the sentence of justification by it in their consciences. Now this is said to be "revealed" in the Gospel, that is, it is taught in the Gospel; that is the word of righteousness, the ministration of it; it is manifested in and by the Gospel. This righteousness is not known by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses; it was hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law, and is brought to light only by the Gospel; it is hid from every natural man, even from the most wise and prudent, and from God's elect themselves before conversion, and is only made known to believers, to whom it is revealed:

from faith to faith;

that is, as say some, from the faith of God to the faith of men; from the faith of preachers to the faith of hearers; from the faith of the Old to the faith of the New Testament saints; or rather from one degree of faith to another; for faith, as it grows and increases, has clearer

sights of this righteousness, as held forth in the Gospel. For the proof of this, a passage of Scripture is cited,

as it is written,
(Habakkuk 2:4) ;

the just shall live by faith:

“a just”, or righteous man is, not everyone who thinks himself, or is thought by others to be so; nor are any so by their obedience to the law of works; but he is one that is made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, which is before said to be revealed in the Gospel. The life which this man lives, and “shall live”, does not design a natural or corporeal life, and a continuance of that, for such die a natural death, as other men; nor an eternal life, for though they shall so live, yet not by faith; but a spiritual life, a life of justification on Christ, of holiness from him, of communion with him, and of peace and joy; which spiritual life shall be continued, and never be lost. The manner in which the just lives, is “by faith”. In the prophet Habakkuk, the words are, “the just shall live” (wtnwmab) , “by his faith” ((Habakkuk 2:4)); which the Septuagint render, “by my faith”: and the apostle only reads, “by faith”, omitting the affix, as well known, and easy to be supplied: for faith, when given by God, and exercised by the believer, is his own, and by it he lives; not upon it, but by it upon Christ the object of it; from whom, in a way of believing, he derives his spiritual life, and all the comforts of it.

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven

The apostle having hinted at the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and which he designed more largely to insist upon in this epistle, and to prove that there can be no justification of a sinner in the sight of God by the deeds of the law, in order to set this matter in a clear light, from hence, to the end of the chapter, and in the following ones, represents the sad estate and condition of the Gentiles with the law of nature, and of the Jews with the law of Moses; by which it most clearly appears, that neither of them could be justified by their obedience to the respective laws under which they were, but that they both stood in need of the righteousness of God. By “the wrath of God” is meant the displicency and indignation of God at sin and sinners; his punitive justice, and awful vengeance; the judgments which he executes in this world; and that everlasting displeasure of his, and wrath to come in

another world, which all through sin are deserving of, some are appointed to, God’s elect are delivered from, through Christ’s sustaining it, in their room and stead, and which comes and abides on all impenitent and unbelieving persons. This is said to be “revealed”, where? not in the Gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed; unless the Gospel be taken for the books of the four Evangelists, or for the Gospel dispensation, or for that part of the ministry of a Gospel preacher, which represents the wrath of God as the desert of sin, the dreadfulfulness of it, and the way to escape it; for the Gospel, strictly taken, is grace, good news, glad tidings, and not wrath and damnation; though indeed in Christ’s sufferings for the sins of his people, which the Gospel gives us an account of, there is a great display of the wrath of God, and of his indignation against sin: but this wrath of God is revealed in the law, it is known by the light of nature, and to be perceived in the law of Moses, and may be observed in the Scriptures, where are many instances and examples of divine wrath and displeasure; as in the total destruction of the old world by a world wide flood, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, turning Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt, the plagues of Egypt, and the several instances mentioned in this chapter. This wrath is said to be God’s wrath “from heaven”, by the awful blackness which covers the heavens, the storms and tempests raised in them, and by pouring down water or fire in a surprising manner, on the inhabitants of the world; or “from heaven”, that is, openly, manifestly, in the sight of all; or from God who is in heaven, and not from second causes; and more especially it will be revealed from heaven, when Christ shall descend from thence at the day of judgment: the subject matter or object of it,

against,
or “upon” which it is revealed, are,

all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men;
that is, all ungodly and unrighteous men; or all men who are guilty of ungodliness, the breach of the first table of the law, which respects the worship of God, and of unrighteousness, the breach of the second table of the law, which regards our neighbours’ good: and these persons are further described as such,

who hold the truth in unrighteousness:
meaning either such who know the Gospel, which is “the truth”, and do not profess it openly, but hold and imprison it in their minds, which is a great piece of

unrighteousness; or if they do profess it, do not live up to it in their lives: or rather the Gentile philosophers are designed, who are spoken of in the following verse; (See Gill on Romans 1:22); who had some knowledge of the truth of the divine Being, and his perfections, and of the difference between moral good and evil; but did not like to retain it themselves, nor communicate all they knew to others, nor did they live according to that knowledge which they had.

Romans 1:19

Because that which may be known of God

There are some things which could not be known of God by the light of nature; as a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the knowledge of God in Christ as Mediator; the God-man and Mediator Jesus Christ; his incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection; the will of God to save sinners by a crucified Jesus; the several peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, particularly the resurrection of the dead, and the manner of worshipping of God with acceptance: but then there are some things which may be known of God, without a revelation. Adam had a perfect knowledge of him; and his sons, though fallen, even the very Heathens have some notion of him, as that there is a God; and by the light of nature it might be known that there is but one God, who is glorious, full of majesty, and possessed of all perfections, as that he is all powerful, wise, good and righteous: and this

is manifest in them,

or “to them”; by the light that is given them: it is light by which that which may be known of God is manifest; and this is the light of nature, which every man has that comes into the world; and this is internal, it is in him, in his mind and conscience, and is communicated to him by God, and that by infusion or inspiration; see (Job 32:8) ;

for God hath showed [it] unto them;

what may be known of him by that light; and which is assisted and may be improved by a consideration of the works of creation and Providence.

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of him

Not the angels, the invisible inhabitants of heaven: nor the unseen glories of another world; nor the decrees of God; nor the persons in the Godhead; but the perfections of God, or his “properties”, as the Arabic

version reads it; and which are explained by “his eternal power and Godhead”: these,

from the creation of the world are clearly seen;
this is no new discovery, but what men have had, and might, by the light of nature, have enjoyed ever since the world was created; these

being understood,
in an intellectual way, by the discursive faculty of the understanding,

by the things that are made;
the various works of creation; all which proclaim the being, unity, and perfections of God their Creator,

so that they are without excuse;
the very Heathens, who have only the light of nature, and are destitute of a revelation, have no colour or pretext for their idolatrous practices, and vicious lives; nor have they, nor will they have anything to object to God’s righteous judgment against them, or why they should not be condemned.

Romans 1:21

Because that when they knew God

Though they had such a knowledge of the being and perfections of God, yet

they glorified him not as God.

They neither thought nor spoke honourably of him; nor did they ascribe those perfections to him, which belonged to him; they did not adhere to him as the one and only God, nor honour him as the Creator of all things out of nothing, and as the sole Governor of the universe; they did not glorify him by the internal exercise of fear of him, love to him, or trust in him, nor by any external worship suitable to his nature, and their own notions of him, Seneca is an instance of this, of whom Austin F6 says,

“that he worshipped what he found fault with, did what he reproved, and adored that which he blamed.”

Neither were thankful;

neither for the knowledge of things they had, which they ascribed to themselves; nor for their mercies, which they imputed to second causes:

but became vain in their imaginations;
the vanity or their minds was the spring and source

of their evil conduct; which may design the wickedness of their hearts, and the imaginations thereof, which were evil, and that continually; the pride of their natures the carnality and weakness of their reasonings, and the whole system of their vain philosophy; and hence they ran into polytheism, or the worshipping of many gods:

and their foolish heart was darkened;

where they thought their great wisdom lay: darkness is natural to the hearts and understandings of all men, which is increased by personal iniquity; Satan is concerned in improving it, and God sometimes gives up the hearts of persons to judicial blindness, which was the case of these men.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 De Civitate Dei, l. 6. c. 10.

Romans 1:22

Professing themselves to be wise

The learned men among the Gentiles first called themselves (sofoi) , “Sophi”, wise men: and afterwards, to cover their wretched pride and vanity, (φιλοσοφοι) , “Philosophers”, lovers of wisdom; but notwithstanding all their arrogance, their large pretensions to wisdom, and boast of it

they became fools;

they appeared to be so; they showed themselves to be such in those very things they prided themselves with the knowledge of: as, for instance, Socrates, after he had asserted the unity of God, and is said to die a martyr for the truth; yet one of the last actions of his life was sacrificing a cock to Aesculapius, at least he desired his friend Crito to do it.

Romans 1:23

And changed the glory of the incorruptible God God is incorruptible and immortal in his nature, and so is opposed to all corruptible creatures and things: he has a glory which is essential to him, and a manifestative one in the creatures, and which is relative, and of right belongs to him: his absolute essential glory cannot be changed, cannot be taken away from him, nor given to another; but his relative glory may be said to be changed, when another is worshipped in his stead, and called by his name. So Philo the Jew F7 speaks of

“some, who, leaving the true God, make to themselves false ones, and impose the name of the eternal and incorruptible upon created and

corruptible beings.”

Into an image made like to corruptible man; which was worshipped in different forms by the several nations of the world:

and to birds;

as the dove by the Samaritans, the hawk, the ibis, and others by the Egyptians:

and fourfooted beasts;

as the ox, and other creatures:

and creeping things;

such as beetles, serpents, and others, by the same.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 678, 679.

Romans 1:24

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness

Not by putting any into them, but by leaving them to the pollution of their nature; by withdrawing his providential restraints from them, and by giving them up to judicial hardness:

through the lusts of their own hearts.

The heart of man is the source of all wickedness; the lusts that dwell there are many, and these tend to uncleanness of one sort or another: by it here is meant particularly bodily uncleanness, since it is said they were given up

to dishonour their own bodies between themselves;

either alone, or with others; so that as they changed the glory of God, and dishonoured him, he left them to dishonour themselves by doing these things which were reproachful and scandalous to human nature.

Romans 1:25

Who changed the truth of God into a lie

Not the truth of the Gospel, which they were unacquainted with; but that which might be known of God as true, and was known of them by the light of nature; or the true God himself, whom they “changed into a lie”; by ascribing to false deities, which were lying vanities, those things which were known of God; and by worshipping them instead of him: for they

worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator;

or “above him” or “against him”, in opposition

to him, or “besides him”, others along with him; or neglecting him, and not worshipping him at all; which is aggravated in that what they worshipped was a creature, either of their own, or of God’s making, and whom they neglected was the Creator of them:

who is blessed for ever, Amen;

is blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to his creatures; which is so glaring a truth, that everyone ought to say and set his “Amen” to it.

Romans 1:26

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections

Because of their idolatrous practices, God left them to very dishonourable actions, sodomitical ones, both among the men and women:

for even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature;

either by prostituting themselves to, and complying with the “sodomitical” embraces of men, in a way that is against nature F8; or by making use of such ways and methods with themselves, or other women, to gratify their lusts, which were never designed by nature for such an use: of these vicious women, and their practices, Seneca F9 speaks, when he says,

“libidine veto nec maribus quidem cedunt, pati natae; Dii illas Deoque, male perdant; adeo perversum commentae, genus impudicitiae, viros ineunt.”

also Clemens Alexandrinus F11 has respect to such, saying,

“(γυναικεω ανδριζονται παρα φυσιν, γαμου μεν αι τε και (γαμουσαι γυναικεω)

and such there were among the Jews, whom they call (נשימי תּמּוּלּוּת זוּ בּוּי) F12, and whom the priests were forbidden to marry.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 Vid. R. Sol Jarchi in Gen. xxiv. 16.

F9 Epist. 95.

F11 Paedagog. l. 3. p. 226.

F12 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 65. 2. Piske Tosaph. ib. artic. 266. Yevamot, fol. 76. 1. & Piske Tosaph. ib. art. 141. Maimonides in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. & Hilchot Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 8, 9.

Romans 1:27

And likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the women

The very sin of “sodomy” is here designed, so called from Sodom, the place where we first hear of it, (Genesis 19:5) , the men of which place, because they burned in their lust one towards another,

as these Gentiles are said to do, God rained upon them fire and brimstone from heaven: an exceeding great sin this is, contrary to nature, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a people and nation among whom it prevails, as it did very much in the Gentile world, and among their greatest philosophers; even those that were most noted for moral virtue are charged with it, as Socrates, Plato, Zeno, and others {m}: it is a sin which generally prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Pagans of old, and among the Papists and Mahometans now; and never was it so rife in this nation as since the schemes of deism and infidelity have found such a reception among us. Thus God, because men dishonour him with their evil principles and practices, leaves them to reproach their own nature, and dishonour their own bodies:

men with men working that which is unseemly;

and of which nothing like it is to be observed in the brutal world:

receiving in themselves the recompence of their error, which was

meet:

God punishes sin with sin; for as the Jews say F14, as “one commandment draws on another, so one transgression draws on another; for the reward of the commandment is the commandment, (hrybe hrybe rkvw) and the reward of transgression is transgression.”

FOOTNOTES:

F13 A. Gellius Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 18. Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 2. in Vit. Socrat. & l. 3. in Vit. Platon.

F14 Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 2.

Romans 1:28

And even as they did not like

This accounts for the justness of the divine procedure in leaving them to commit such scandalous iniquities; that since they had some knowledge of God by the light of nature, and yet did not care

to retain God in [their] knowledge;

or to own and acknowledge him as God, to worship and glorify him as such; but took every method to erase this knowledge out of their minds, and keep it from others:

God gave them over to a reprobate mind;

a vain empty mind, worthless, good for nothing devoid of all true knowledge and judgment; incapable of approving what is truly good, or of disapproving that which is evil; a mind that has lost all conscience of things, and is disapproved of by God, and all good men:

to do those things which are not convenient;

which are neither agreeably to the light of nature, nor convenient to, or becoming the honour of human nature; things which the brutes themselves, who are destitute of reason, do not do.

Romans 1:29

Being filled with all unrighteousness

From hence, to the end of the chapter, follows a large and black list and catalogue of the sad characters of the Gentiles, and of the best men they had among them; for the apostle is all along speaking, not of the common people, but of their wise professors, and moral instructors; than which there never was a more wicked set of men that ever lived upon the face of the earth; who under the guise of morality were guilty of the greatest pride and covetousness, and of the most filthy debaucheries imaginable: they were “filled with all unrighteousness”. This word includes in it all manner of sin and wickedness in general; fitly expresses the condition of fallen men, destitute of a righteousness; designs every violation of the law respecting our neighbour; and is opposed to that vain conceit of righteousness which these men had: particular branches of it follow; as,

fornication;

which sometimes includes adultery and an unchastity; simple fornication was not reckoned a sin among the Gentiles:

wickedness;

or mischief, which intends not so much the internal wickedness of the heart, as that particular vice, by which a man is inclined and studies to do hurt, to others, as Satan does:

covetousness;

this may intend every insatiable lust, and particularly the sin which goes by this name, and is the root of all evil, and was a reigning sin among the Gentiles. Seneca, the famous moralist, was notoriously guilty of this vice, being one of the greatest usurers that ever lived:

maliciousness;

the word denotes either the iniquity of nature in which men are conceived and born; or that desire of revenge in men, for which some are very notorious:

envy;

at the superior knowledge and learning, wealth and riches, happiness, and outward prosperity of others:

murder:

which sometimes arose from envy, wherefore they are put together. There is an elegant “paronomasia” in the Greek text:

debate;

strife about words more than things, and more for vain glory, and a desire of victory, than for truth:

deceit;

through their empty notions of philosophy; hence “philosophy and vain deceit” go together, (Colossians 2:8) ; making large pretences to morality, when they were the vilest of creatures:

malignity;

moroseness; having no courteousness nor affability in them, guilty of very ill manners; as particularly they were who were of the sect of the Cynics. Now they are said to be “filled with”, and “full of”, these things; not filled by God, but by Satan and themselves; and it denotes the aboundings of wickedness in them, and which was insatiable. The apostle goes on to describe them, as

whisperers;

who made mischief among friends, by privately suggesting, and secretly insinuating things into the mind of one to the prejudice of another.

Romans 1:30

Backbiters

Who more publicly defamed the characters of their neighbours, and hurt their good name, credit and reputation, though behind their backs:

haters of God;

some read it, “hated of God”; as all workers of iniquity are; but rather this expresses their sin, that they were deniers of the being and providence of God, and showed themselves to be enemies to him by their evil works:

despiteful;

both by opprobrious words, and injurious actions:

proud;

of their natural knowledge, learning, eloquence and vain philosophy:

boasters:

of their parts, abilities, wisdom and works; all which they attributed to themselves, and to the sharpness of their wit, their sagacity and industry:

inventors of evil things;

of evil schemes of morality and philosophy, and of evil practices, as well as principles:

disobedient to parents;

which was acting contrary to the light of nature.

Romans 1:31

Without understanding

Of God, of his nature and worship, of things divine and even moral, being given up to a reprobate mind:

covenant breakers;

had no regard to private or public contracts:

without natural affection;

to their parents, children, relations and friends:

implacable;

when once offended there was no reconciling of them:

unmerciful;

had no pity and compassion to persons in distress.

Romans 1:32

Who knowing the judgment of God

Either of the law of God, the law and light of nature, by which they might in some measure know the difference between good and evil, and what was right and wrong; or the judiciary sentence of God against sin:

that they which commit such things are worthy of death;

at least of corporeal death:

not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them;

all which greatly aggravated their wickedness, since they sinned against light and knowledge, with approbation and good liking of their own sins, and took pleasure in the sins of others. The Jews have a saying {p},

“that no man is suspected of a thing but he has done it; and if he has not done the whole of it, he has done part of it, and if he has not done part of it, he has thought in his heart to do it, and if he has not thought in his heart to do it, (ראה אחרים ששו ושמה) , “he has seen others do it, and has rejoiced”.

And if such a man is a wicked man, how much more wicked are such who commit sin themselves, and delight in the sins of others? now from this whole account we see the insufficiency of the light of nature to guide persons in the way of salvation; what need there was of a divine revelation; and how impossible it is that such men should ever be justified before God, by any works of seeming righteousness done by them; which the apostle had in view, in giving this account of the depraved nature and conduct of the Gentiles, and of those among them who professed to be, and were the wisest and most knowing of them.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 18. 2.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 2

This chapter contains, in general, a vindication of the justice and equity of the divine procedure against men, such as are described in the preceding chapter; and a refutation of the several pleas that might be made by the Gentiles, who had not the law, and by the Jews who had it; and concludes with exposing the wickedness of the latter, and with showing who they are that are properly Jews, and circumcised persons, in the account of God. It begins, in Ro 2:1 , with an inference deduced from what had been said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter; concluding that such, be they who they will, Jews or Gentiles, are inexcusable, who do the things they condemn others for: but though the judgment of such persons is wrong, the apostle observes, Ro 2:2 , that the judgment of God, in the condemnation of them, is right, of which he, and others, were fully assured; and which judgment is commended, by the rule of it, being according to truth; by the objects of it, criminals, who

are left without excuse, and by the inevitableness of it, Ro 2:3 , being such as cannot possibly be escaped: and though some men might hope to escape it, because not immediately punished, but loaded with the blessings of Providence, and peculiar benefits of divine goodness; yet this was to be ascribed to the forbearance of God for the present; and that if these favours were despised, and they had not a good effect upon them to bring to repentance, but instead thereof were more and more hardened under them, as their guilt would be increased, so wrath would be secretly laying up for them, which will be revealed in the day of judgment, Ro 2:4,5 , at which time justice will be done to every man as his works will be found to be, Ro 2:6 , then follows a description of the several sorts of persons that will be judged, and of the different things that will be their portion: as that eternal life will be given to good men, Ro 2:7 , and the wrath of God poured down on bad men, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, Ro 2:8,9 . The happiness of good men is repeated again, and explained, and promised to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile, Ro 2:10 , and a reason given of this just and equal distribution, taken from the nature of God, who is no respecter of persons, Ro 2:11 , an instance of which is produced in both Jews and Gentiles, that sin; the one perishing with, the other without the law, Ro 2:12 , since it is not barely having and hearing the law, but acting up to it, which only can justify before God, Ro 2:13 , upon which the apostle proceeds to refute the plea that might be made by the Gentiles, in favour of themselves, why they should not be condemned, taken from their not having the written law; for though they had not the law written on tables of stone, as the Jews had, yet they had, as he observes, the law of nature written on their hearts, against which they sinned: this he proves by the effects of it, discernible in many of them by their outward lives and conversations, in conformity to the law; and by the inward testimony of their consciences, approving of good deeds, and reproaching for bad ones, Ro 2:14,15 , which two verses being put into a parenthesis, Ro 2:16 , is connected with Ro 2:13 , and points at the time when the doers of the law shall be justified, even at the day of judgment: which judgment is described by the author of it, God; by the subject of it, the secrets of men's hearts; by the person employed in the divine procedure, Jesus Christ; and by the evidence and certainty of it, the Gospel preached by the apostle, and then follow a description of the Jews, an account of their profession of religion, and an ironical concession of the several characters they assumed to

themselves: they are described by their name, a Jew; by their religion, which lay in trusting in the law of Moses, and in boasting of their interest in God, as the God of Israel, Ro 2:17 , by their knowledge of the will of God, and approbation of the excellent things of his law, Ro 2:18 , and by the characters they took to themselves, Ro 2:19,20 , from which the apostle takes an occasion to expose the wickedness of some of their principal men, even their teachers, Ro 2:21,22 , by whose wicked lives and conversations God was dishonoured, and his name blasphemed among the Gentiles, Ro 2:23,24 , hence it appears, that their name, profession, and character, would not justify them before God; wherefore the apostle goes on, to remove their plea taken from circumcision, showing that could be of no use to them, but became void through their breach of the law, Ro 2:25 , and that, on the other hand, an uncircumcised Gentile, by keeping the law from right principles, and to a right end, appeared to be the true circumcision, Ro 2:26 , wherefore the circumcised Jew that broke the law, stood condemned by the uncircumcised Gentile that fulfilled it; so far was circumcision from being any part of his justification, or a plea in favour of it, Ro 2:27 . Then the apostle concludes the chapter, by giving a definition of a real Jew, and of true circumcision; which he does first negatively, that it is not anything external that makes him a Jew, or anything in the flesh that is right circumcision; but secondly, positively, that it is an inward work of grace that denominates a man a Jew, in a spiritual sense, or an Israelite indeed; and that it is the circumcision of the heart, which is wrought by the Spirit of God, that is true and genuine: and such a Jew, and such a circumcision, are approved of by God, and commended by him, when the other have only praise of men, Ro 2:28,29 , and therefore, however such persons may be justified before men, they cannot be justified in the sight of God; which is the drift and design of the apostle in the whole.

ROMANS CHAPTER 2

1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou

shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through

breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 2

Romans 2:1

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man

Some think, from the connection of these words with the preceding chapter, that the Gentiles are here meant; and particularly those among them who seemed to be virtuous, and took upon them to be the reprovers of others, and yet did the same things themselves, as Socrates, Cato, Seneca, and others; and therefore must be inexcusable, because they knew better, and would be thought to have been so; wherefore such could never be justified before God by their works, but might be justly condemned by him, nor shall they escape his righteous judgment. Others think the Jews are meant, who despised and condemned the Gentiles, and thought themselves to be righteous persons, and justified in the sight of God; and who, though they were secretly guilty of many abominable iniquities, yet were very severe upon the sins of others, and therefore inexcusable: others think that magistrates are designed, whether among Jews or Gentiles, who reprove and punish sin in others, and therefore must be supposed to know the law, and the nature of sin, and so are inexcusable and self-condemned when they do the same things; wherefore though they may pass with impunity among men, they shall not escape the judgment of God. Rather the words respect every man, of whatsoever nation, office, or place; and may be particularly applied to hypocrites, and seem designed to correct censoriousness, and hasty judging,

and to throw confusion on such who value themselves on being the censurers and reprovers of others:

whosoever thou art that judgest;

whether a Jew or a Gentile, a public magistrate or a private person:

for wherein thou judgest another;

that is, in what case or instance; the Complutensian edition and the Arabic version read, “in” “or with what judgment thou judgest another”; (See Gill on Matthew 7:2);

thou condemnest thyself;

by judging them:

for thou that judgest dost the same things;

art guilty of the same thing condemned in others, and therefore must be self-condemned.

Romans 2:2

But we are sure that the judgment of God

By “the judgment of God”, is not meant what is exercised on and towards men in this life, but what will follow after death; which is called judgment to come, is represented as certain, will be universal as to persons and things, and is here called “the judgment of God”, in opposition to the judgment of men; and because it will be carried on by God only, who is omniscient and omnipotent, and will be definitive: this is and will be,

according to truth, against them which commit such things;

in opposition to all hypocrisy and unrighteousness: and it may design the law and light of nature by which the Gentiles, the law of Moses by which the Jews, and the Gospel of Christ by which all have enjoyed the Gospel revelation, will be judged; or the truth of their own consciences in them all: now we may be sure of this judgment; and of its being according to truth, from reason, from Scripture, and from the being and perfections of God.

Romans 2:3

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same

Some men may be so vain as to imagine, that though they do the same things which they condemn in others, they

shall escape the judgment of God:

but such will find themselves most sadly mistaken; there is no avoiding the general judgment; all men must come to it; there will be no eluding it through craftiness and deceit, through bribery and corruption; there will be no escaping condign punishment, through might in the criminal, or through the judge’s ignorance of his crimes, or want of ability and power to punish.

Romans 2:4

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness

The apostle anticipates an objection against what he had said, taken from the prosperity of these persons; who might conclude from thence, that they were not so wicked as he had represented them; and that they should escape the judgment of God, otherwise they would have been punished by God in this life, and not have prospered as they did; which objection is removed by observing, that it was not their innocence, but “the riches of” divine “goodness, and longsuffering and forbearance”, which were the causes of their prosperity: by “the riches of God’s goodness”, are not meant the riches of his special, spiritual, and eternal goodness, which his own people are only partakers of: but the general riches of his temporal and providential goodness, which the men of the world have commonly the greatest share of; they have it in great plenty, which is signified by “riches”: and by his “longsuffering and forbearance” are designed, not his forbearance of his chosen ones and his longsuffering to them, which issue in their salvation; but his forbearance of sinners, and longsuffering towards them, in not as yet pouring down his wrath and displeasure on them; all which are “despised” by them; the riches of his goodness, when he is not glorified for his providential mercies, and in them, and when these are abused to the lusts of men. The

forbearance

of God is despised, when men on account of it harden themselves in sin; and his

longsuffering,

when they deny his concern in Providence, or a future judgment, and promise themselves impunity. Moreover, the apostle obviates the above objection by asserting that God’s end in his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, was not to testify to their innocence, as they imagined, but to lead them to repentance, of which they were ignorant;

not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

This is to be understood not of a spiritual and evangelical repentance, which is a free grace gift, and which none but the Spirit of God can lead, or bring persons to; but of a natural and legal repentance, which lies in an external sorrow for sin, and in an outward cessation from it, and reformation of life and manners, which the goodness of God to the Jews should have led them to; who had a large share of the good things of life, a land flowing with milk and honey, and many outward privileges which other nations had not, as the giving of the law, the covenant and promises, the word and ordinances; and repentance here chiefly designs, as it may respect the Gentiles, a change of mind and practice in them relating to idolatry and superstition. Now the providential goodness of God has a tendency to lead persons to repentance on this account; but of this end of divine goodness the Gentiles were ignorant; nor was this end answered thereby; which shows the wretched depravity of human nature; see (Acts 14:15-17).

Romans 2:5

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart

The apostle goes on to show, that such persons who promise themselves impunity on the score of prosperity, shall not always go unobserved and unpunished; for there is a day of wrath and righteous judgment hastening on, and will take place after they have filled up the measure of their iniquity. There is a natural “hardness” of the heart in every son and daughter of Adam; and there is an acquired habitual hardness, which is increased by sinning; and a judicial one, which God, for sin, sometimes gives persons up unto. An “impenitent heart” is not only an heart which does not repent, but such an one as cannot repent, being harder than the nether millstone. Now men, by such hardness and impenitence,

treasure up unto [themselves] wrath:

they are the authors of their own destruction; by which is meant the wrath of God, in opposition to the riches of his goodness, despised by them; and is in reserve for wicked men: and is laid up

against,

and will be brought forth in

the day of wrath;

which the Scriptures call “the evil day”, (Amos 6:3

) (Ephesians 6:13); the day fixed by God, when he will call men to an account for their sins, and stir up all his wrath against them:

and revelation;

that is, the day of revelation, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flames of fire, the sins of men shall be revealed, and the wrath of God against them:

of the righteous judgment of God;

so some copies read; that is, the day of the righteous judgment; so the Arabic version reads, “and of the appearance of God, and of his righteous judgment”; for the judgment will be at the appearance of Christ, who is God, and at his kingdom, (2 Timothy 4:1) . The Alexandrian copy reads, “and of the retribution of the righteous judgment of God”; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read, rendering the words, “if so”, or “seeing thy retribution may come upon thee”, and “if the judgment of God may befall thee”; for when the judgment of God shall come, as there will be a revelation of men’s sins, and of the wrath of God against them, there will be a just retribution according to their works. Or “the revelation of the righteous judgment of God”; that is, when the judgment of God, which is now hid, shall appear; and which is said to be “righteous”, because it will be carried on in a righteous manner, and proceed upon, and be executed according to the strictest rules of justice and equity.

Romans 2:6

Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

God will be the Judge, who is righteous, holy, just, and true; every man in particular will be judged; as the judgment will be general to all, it will be special to everyone, and will proceed according to their works; for God will render to wicked men according to the demerit of their sins, the just recompense of reward, eternal damnation; and to good men eternal life, not according to the merit of their good works, which have none in them, but according to the nature of them; such who believe in Christ, and perform good works from a principle of grace, shall receive the reward of the inheritance, which is a reward of grace, and not of debt. In other words, God will render to evil men according to the true desert of their evil deeds; and of his own free grace will render to good men, whom he has made so by his grace, what is suitable and agreeable to those good

works, which, by the assistance of his grace, they have been enabled to perform.

Romans 2:7

To them who by patient continuance in well doing

These words are descriptive of one sort of persons, to whom God will render according to their works; and must be understood not of the Gentiles, the best and most moralized among them; for they sought after worldly things, after human wisdom, and popular applause, and not after God, his honour and glory, nor after immortality, which is only brought to light by the Gospel; nor of the pharisaical Jews, who sought for righteousness by the works of the law, and honour and glory from men, and not from God; nor of any unregenerate persons, but only of such who have the true principles of grace implanted in them, whether Jews or Gentiles: now the things which these men seek after are

glory;

not the glory of this world, nor any from the men of it; but the glory of God and Christ; to be glorious within and without, by the grace and righteousness of Christ here, and to enjoy eternal glory with him hereafter.

Honour;

not that which Adam had in innocence, and did not abide in; but that which is, and abides with Christ, and which all the saints have, and shall have.

Immortality;

not the immortality of the soul, which is common to all; but the incorruption of the body, or the glorious resurrection of it to everlasting life at the great day, or the incorruptible crown, and never fading inheritance of the saints in light. The manner in which these things are sought is, “by patient continuance in well doing”; by doing good works, and by doing these good works well, from a principle of faith and love, and with a view to the glory of God; and by patiently enduring reproaches and sufferings for well doing, and by persevering therein: not that these things are to be had, or are expected by the saints to be had for the sake of patience and well doing; yet they may be sought for, and looked unto, as an encouragement to well doing, and continuance therein; and though not “for”, yet “in” well doing there is a reward. These words do not express that for the sake of which glory is had; but only describe the persons who seek, and the manner in which they seek for it, to whom

God will render

eternal life,

which he of his rich grace promised them before the world was, and of his free favour has put into the hands of Christ for them, and which, as a pure gift of grace, he bestows on them through him.

Romans 2:8

But unto them that are contentious

This is a description of the other sort of persons to whom God will render according to their deeds, “*who are of the contention*”; who contend for victory, and not truth; strive about words to no profit; are quarrelsome, and sow discord among men, and in churches; *and do not obey the truth*; neither attend to the light of nature, and to that which may be known of God by it; nor regard and submit to the Gospel revelation and so design both the Gentiles, which knew not God, and Jews, and others, who obey not the Gospel: *but obey unrighteousness*; are servants of sin: to these God renders are servants of sin: to these God renders indignation, **and wrath**; wrathful or fiery indignation, the hottest of his fury.

Romans 2:9

Tribulation and anguish

These, with the foregoing words, are expressive of the second death, the torments of hell, the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched: which will fall

upon every soul of man that doth evil;

whose course of life and conversation is evil; for “the soul that sins shall die”, (Ezekiel 18:4 Ezekiel 18:20) , unless satisfaction is made for his sins by the blood of Christ:

of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

regard being had to what nation they belong

Romans 2:10

But glory, honour, and peace

Which are so many words for the everlasting happiness of the saints; which is a “crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4)); an honour exceeding that of the greatest potentates upon earth, since such that enjoy it will be kings and priests, and sit with Christ on his throne to all eternity; and is a peace that passes all understanding: all which will be rendered

to every man that doth good, to the Jew first, and also to the

Gentile;

which none without Christ, and his grace, and by the strength of nature, does, or can do; not that good works are causes of salvation, but are testimonies of faith, and fruits of grace, with which salvation is connected, whether they be found in Jews or Gentiles; for neither grace nor salvation are peculiar to any nation, or set of people.

Romans 2:11

For there is no respect of persons with God.

] It will not come into consideration, at the day of judgment, of what nation men are; or from what parents they are descended; nor of what age and sex persons be; nor in what state and condition they have lived in this world; nor will it be asked to what sect they have belonged, and by what denomination they have been called; or whether they have conformed to such and such externals and rituals in religion; but only whether they are righteous men or sinners; and accordingly as they appear under these characters, judgment will proceed. Some object from hence, though without any reason, to the doctrine of particular election of certain persons to everlasting salvation. This passage respects matters of strict justice, and is a forensic expression relating to courts of judicature, where persons presiding are to have no regard to the faces of men, but do that which is strictly just between man and man; and does not respect matters of grace and free favour, such as giving alms, forgiving debts A judge, as such, is to regard no man’s person, but to proceed in matters before him, according to the rules of law and justice; should he do otherwise, he would be chargeable with being a respecter of persons; but then he may bestow alms on what objects he pleases; and forgive one man who is personally indebted to him, and not another, without any such imputation. This, applied to the case in hand, abundantly clears it; for though God, as a Judge, respects no man’s person; yet in matters of grace he distinguishes one person from another, as it is plain he does by the bounties of his Providence. Besides, God is not bound to any person by any laws, but acts as a Sovereign; he is not moved by anything in the creature; as his choice is not confined to persons of any particular nation, family, sex, or condition, so neither does it proceed upon anything, or a foresight of anything in them, or done by them; and as there is no

worthiness in them that are chosen, and saved above others, so no injury is done to the rest: add to all this, that those that are saved by virtue of electing grace, are saved in a way of righteousness agreeably to the holy law, and strict justice of God; so that no complaint can be made against the distinguishing methods of grace, upon the foot of strict justice.

Romans 2:12

For as many as have sinned without law

This is an instance of the strict justice of God, and proves him to be no respecter of persons; for the Gentiles, who were “without law”, the written law of Moses, not without the law of nature in their breasts, nor without some civil laws and statutes of their own; inasmuch as they “sinned” against the God of nature, and the law and light of nature, they

shall also perish without law:

not that their condemnation and perdition will be illegal, or not in due course of law; but it will not proceed upon, or according to the law of Moses, they never had; and much less for not believing in Christ, of whom they never heard; but their perdition will be for their sins committed without the law of Moses, against the law of nature: their not having the written law of Moses will be no plea in their favour, or be a reason why they should not be condemned; their persons will not be regarded as with or without the law, but their sins committed by them, to which facts their consciences will bear witness:

and,

so on the other hand,

as many as have sinned in the law;

who have been in and under the law of Moses, and have sinned against it, meaning the Jews:

shall be judged by the law;

and condemned by it, as they were in this world, and will be hereafter: their having this law will be no bar against their condemnation, but rather an aggravation of it; their hearing of it will be no plea in their favour; nor their doing of it neither, unless they could have done it to perfection; for perfect obedience it requires, as a justifying righteousness, otherwise it curses, condemns, and adjudges to death.

Romans 2:13

For not the hearers of the law are just before God

The apostle here shows, that the Jews were justly condemned, notwithstanding their having and hearing of the law; since hearing without doing it, will never denominate persons righteous in the sight of God, however it might recommend them in the sight of men: regard seems to be had either to the first delivery of the law by Moses to the people of Israel, when he read it to them, and they hearkened to it, and promised obedience; or rather to the reading and hearing it every sabbath day; and may include a speculative knowledge of it, without a practical obedience to it; and which therefore must fall greatly short of entitling them to a justifying righteousness; since not these,

but the doers of the law, shall be justified;

by whom are meant, not such who merely literally and externally fulfil the law, as they imagine; for the law is spiritual, and regards the inward as well as the outward man, and requires internal holiness, as well as external obedience; and the apostle is speaking of justification before God, who sees the heart, and not before men, who judge according to outward appearance: nor are such designed who are imperfect doers of the law; for the law requires a perfect obedience, and what is not perfect is not properly righteousness; nor does it, nor can it consider an imperfect righteousness as a perfect one; for it accuses of, pronounces guilty, curses, and condemns for every transgression of it. But such only can be intended, who are doers of it spiritually, internally, as well as externally, and that perfectly. Adam, in his state of innocence, was a perfect doer of the law; he sinning, and all his posterity in him, none of them are righteous, but all pass under a sentence of condemnation. The best of men, even believers in Christ, are not without sin in themselves; and when any of the saints are said to be perfect, it must be understood in a comparative sense, or as they are considered in Christ. There never was but one since Adam, and that is Christ, who has fulfilled, or could perfectly fulfil the law; the thing is impossible and impracticable for fallen man: hence these words must be understood either hypothetically, thus, not the hearers of the law, but if there were any perfect doers of it, they would be justified before God; or else of such persons who are considered in Christ, by whom the whole perfect righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, and who may be reckoned as perfect doers of it in him, their substitute, surety, and representative.

Romans 2:14**For when the Gentiles which have not the law**

The objection of the Gentiles against their condemnation, taken from their being without the law, is here obviated. The apostle owns that they had not the law, that is, the written law of Moses, and yet intimates that they had, and must have a law, against which they sinned, and so deserved punishment, and which they in part obeyed; for these men

do by nature the things contained in the law.

The matter and substance of the moral law of Moses agrees with the law and light of nature; and the Gentiles in some measure, and in some sort, did these things by nature; not that men by the mere strength of nature without the grace of God, can fulfil the law, or do anything that is acceptable to God; and indeed, what these men did was merely natural and carnal, and so unacceptable to God. Some understand this of nature assisted by grace, in converted Gentiles, whether before or after the coming of Christ; others expound the phrase, by nature, freely, willingly, in opposition to the servile spirit of the Jews, in their obedience to the law; though it rather seems to design the dictates of natural reason, by which they acted: and so

these having not the law

the written law,

are a law to themselves;

which they have by nature and use, and which natural reason dictates to them. So Plato distinguishes the law

“into written and un written F17: the written law is that which was used in commonwealths; and that (kata eyh) (ginomenov) , “which was according to custom or nature”, was called unwritten, such as not to go to market naked, nor to be clothed with women’s clothes; which things were not forbidden by any law, but these were not done because forbidden by the unwritten law;”

which he calls “unwritten”, because not written on tables, or with ink; otherwise it was written in their minds, and which by nature and use they were accustomed to.

FOOTNOTES:

F17 Laertii Vit. Philosoph. l. 3. in Vita Platon.

Romans 2:15**Which show the work of the law written in their hearts,**

&c.] Though the Gentiles had not the law in form, written on tables, or in a book, yet they had “the work”, the matter, the sum and substance of it in their minds; as appears by the practices of many of them, in their external conversation. The moral law, in its purity and perfection, was written on the heart of Adam in his first creation; was sadly obliterated by his sin and fall; upon several accounts, and to answer various purposes, a system of laws was written on tables of stone for the use of the Israelites; and in regeneration the law is reinscribed on the hearts of God’s people; and even among the Gentiles, and in their hearts, there are some remains of the old law and light of nature, which as by their outward conduct appears, so by the inward motions of their minds,

their conscience also bearing witness;

for, as the Jews say F18 (wb hdyem Mda lv wtmvn) , “the soul of a man witnesses in him”; for, or against him:

and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;

and this the Heathens themselves acknowledge, when they

FOOTNOTES:

F19 speak of

“(tameion dikasthron kai krithrion thv suneidhsewv) , “the conclave, tribunal and judgment of conscience”; and which they call (dikasthn dikaiotaton) , “the most righteous judge”: whose judgment reason receives, and gives its suffrage to, whether worthy of approbation or reproof; when it reads in the memory as if written on a table the things that are done, and then beholding the law as an exemplar, pronounces itself either worthy of honour or dishonour.”

F18 T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 16. 1. & Taanith, fol. 11. 1.

F19 Hierocles in Carmina Pythagor. p. 81, 206, 209, 213, 214.

Romans 2:16**In the day when God shall judge**

These words are to be read in connection with (Romans 2:13) , and express the time when both Jews and Gentiles will be judged, called a “day”, both because of the clearness and evidence of the judgment that will be made, and because a certain time is fixed, though not known, which will surely come; also the matter of the judgment, which will be,

the secrets of men:

whether good or bad, which are only known to God and themselves, and which may have been done ignorantly by them; “for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”; (Ecclesiastes 12:14) , which is so interpreted by the Jews F20,

“when R. Jochanan came to that Scripture, he wept; “for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing;”

upon which the gloss says, yea, for those things which are hidden from him, which he has committed through ignorance, will he bring him into judgment; everything, even the least thing in a literal sense, but not for such silly trifling things they mention in the same place; doubtless the Holy Ghost means the secrets of men’s hearts and actions, and the hidden things of darkness which are contrary to the holy law of God. The person by whom this awful judgment will be carried on is,

Jesus Christ;

to whom all judgment is committed, who is ordained Judge of quick and dead, and is every way fit for that office, being God as well as man, and so both omniscient and omnipotent: and this the apostle says will be,

according to my Gospel;

his meaning is not that the Gospel will be the, rule of judgment, because he speaking of the judgment of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, who never heard of the Gospel; but that what he had said concerning a day of judgment, of Christ’s being the Judge, and of God’s judging by him the secrets of men, were as true and as certain as the Gospel which he preached was; and was “conformable”, or agreeable to it, as the Arabic version reads it, and might be learned and proved from it. This he calls, “my Gospel”; not because the author or subject of it; but because it was committed to his trust and was preached by him; and in opposition to, and

to distinguish it from the Gospel of the false apostles. Eusebius says {u}, that the Apostle Paul had used to call the Gospel according to Luke his Gospel, and that it is said, that whenever he makes mention of his Gospel, he designs that.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 5. 1.

F21 Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. p. 73.

Romans 2:17

Behold, thou art called a Jew

From hence to the end of the chapter the Jews are particularly addressed; their several privileges and characters are commemorated, which by an ironical concession are allowed them; several charges are brought against them, even against their principal men; and the plea in favour of them, from their circumcision, is considered; and the apostle's view in the whole, is to show that they could not be justified before God by their obedience to the law of Moses: "behold"; take notice, observe it, this will be granted: "thou art called a Jew"; thou art one by name, by nation, and by religion; but no name, nor outward religion, nor a mere profession, will justify before God:

and retest in the law;

which may be understood of their having the law and the knowledge of it, what is to be done and avoided easily, without any fatigue and labour; of their pleasing and applauding themselves with the bare having and hearing of it; of their trust and confidence in it; and of their inactivity and security in it, as persons asleep; and so of their coming short of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of Christ the end of the law for righteousness, their whole confidence being placed in that: so the Targumist in (Jeremiah 8:8) paraphrases the words,

“we are wise, “and in the law of the Lord”,
(אנחנו חכמים), do we trust;”

and makest thy boast of God.

There is a right boasting of God in opposition to boasting in the creature, when men ascribe all the blessings of nature and grace to the Lord alone, and praise him for all their enjoyments, temporal and spiritual; and when they trust in, and glory, and make their boast of Christ as the Lord their righteousness, in whom alone they are, and can be justified. But the boasting here spoken of, was such that was not right;

these men boasted of their bare external knowledge of the one God, when the Gentiles around them were ignorant of him; of their being the covenant people of God, when others were aliens and strangers; and of their having the word and worship of the true God, which other nations were unacquainted with; and, on these external things they depended, which was their fault.

Romans 2:18

And knowest his will

Not the secret will or purpose of God; nor his revealed will in the Gospel, for of this they were ignorant; but his declared will in the law, showing what is to be done, and what is not to be done: to know which in express terms was a privilege, that other people had not; but then the bare knowledge of this will be of no avail: for persons may know their Lord's will, as the Jews did, and not do it, and so be worthy to be beaten with many stripes:

and approvest the things that are more excellent:

or “triest the things that differ”; from one another, and from the will and law of God; or as the Syriac, “discernest” (atylw) , “things that are convenient”; agreeable, which are fit and ought to be done: and having tried and discerned them, they approved of them in their judgment as the things more excellent; but then they did not put these excellent things in practice which they approved of; and the knowledge and approbation they had of these things, arose from their

being instructed out of the law,

and not the Gospel; for the excellent things of the Gospel, they had no discerning, knowledge and approbation of; see (Philippians 1:10) .

Romans 2:19

And art confident that thou thyself

Being vainly puffed up in, their fleshly minds, they were strongly persuaded that they were very fit persons to be

a guide to the blind:

all men are by nature blind, as to the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; the meaner sort of the people among the Jews seem to be intended here; or else the ignorant Gentiles, whom the Jews were very fond of making proselytes to their religion and laws; but miserable guides were they, whether to their own people, or others; blind guides of the blind. Gospel

ministers best deserve this title:

a light of them that are in darkness;

so Christ, John the Baptist, the disciples of Christ, and all Gospel ministers are; but these men, who arrogated such characters to themselves, were dim lights, and dark lanterns. The apostle seems to have respect to those very high and exalted characters the Jews give of their doctors, as when they call one, (נהורא בוינא) , “the lamp of light” F23; another, (קדישא בוינא) , “the holy lamps” F24; and a third, (larvy rn) , “the lamp of Israel” F25; with many others of the same kind; (See Gill on Matthew 5:14) and (See Gill on John 5:35).

FOOTNOTES:

F23 T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 1.

F24 Zohar passim.

F25 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2.

Romans 2:20

An instructor of the foolish

All men in a state of unregeneracy are foolish, and need instruction; here the common people among the Jews, who knew not the law, are meant; it was very usual to call anyone of their doctors and masters (hrwm) , “an instructor”: it follows,

a teacher of babes;

either in age or in understanding; such who taught either of them were called by the Jews (twqwnyt ydmlm) , “teachers of babes”. Thus they paraphrase the text in (Daniel 12:3) :

“they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. This is the Judge who judges, the judgment of truth truly, and the collectors of alms: and they that turn, many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever; these are, (גלמודי תנוקות) , “the teachers of babes” F26.”

Though these are said F1 to be inferior to the wise men, or doctors:

which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law:

they had not a true knowledge of the law; only a draught and scheme, the outward form of the law, and a mere shadow and appearance of the knowledge of the truth of it. From hence the apostle would have it concluded, that though the Jews had the law, and in some sense knew it, yet inasmuch as they did not

perform it, they could not be justified by it; and that even their teachers, their greatest masters and doctors, were very deficient, as appears from what follows; and since they could not be instilled by it, who taught others the knowledge of it, the hearers of it could not expect justification from it.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2. & 21. 1, 2.

Maimon. Hilchot Talmud Tora, c. 2. sect. 1.

F1 Gloss in Sota, fol. 49. 1.

Romans 2:21

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?

&c.] Several charges are here brought against the Jews, even against their teachers; for though they are put by way of question, they are to be considered as so many assertions and matters of fact; thus, though they taught others, they did not teach themselves; they were blind leaders of the blind; they were ignorant of the law, of the spirituality of it; they were desirous to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed: they were ignorant of the righteousness of God, of whom they boasted; and of the more excellent things of Moses, and the prophets, they pretended to explain; and of the Messiah, of whom their prophecies so much spoke: and besides, what they did understand and teach, they did not practise themselves; than which nothing is more shameful, or more betrays stupidity and ignorance; for as they themselves F2 say,

“he that teaches men, (בדבר שהוא לא ישה) , “that which he himself does not do”, is like a blind man who has a lamp in his hand, and enlightens others, but he, himself walks in darkness.”

And such teachers they own were among them.

“Beautiful (say they F3) are the words which come out of the mouths of them that do, them: Ben Assai was a beautiful preacher, but did not well observe;”

i.e., to do what he said.

Thou that preach at a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

some understand this figuratively, of stealing, or taking away the true sense of the law, and putting a

false one upon it; of which these men were notoriously guilty: but rather, it is to be understood literally, not only of the inward desires and motions of their minds after this sin, and of their consenting to, and conniving at theft and robbery, but of their doing it themselves; who, under pretence of long prayers, “devoured widows’ houses”, (Matthew 23:14) (Mark 12:40) (Luke 20:47) , plundered and robbed them of their substance: no wonder that these men preferred Barabbas, a thief and a robber, to Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Sepher Hamaalot, p. 87. Apud Buxtorf. Heb. Florileg. p. 75.

F3 Bereshit Rabba, fol. 30. 3.

Romans 2:22

Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery

Adultery here is to be taken not figuratively for adulterating the word of God, and mixing it with their own inventions; but literally for the sin of adultery, and that not in heart only, but in act:

dost thou commit adultery?

an iniquity which greatly prevailed among the Jews at this time of day; hence Christ calls them “an adulterous generation”, (Matthew 12:39) (16:4) (Mark 8:38) ; and that to such a degree, that by the advice of their great Rabbi, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, they left off the trial of the suspected woman, cases of this nature being so very numerous: and this sin prevailed not only among the common people, but among their principal doctors; as may be learnt from their own writings, and from that conviction of this iniquity which the Scribes and Pharisees were brought under by Christ, when the woman, taken in adultery, was had before him by them, (John 8:9) .

Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

for though at this time they abhorred idolatry, to which their forefathers were so much inclined, and so often fell into, yet they were guilty of sacrilege; by violating the worship of God, and polluting it with their own inventions; by pillaging or withholding, or not offering the sacrifices they ought; and by plundering the temple, and converting the sacred things of it to their own use.

Romans 2:23

Thou that makest thy boast of the law

Of their having it, which other nations had not; of their knowledge of it, which many of their own people were without, or had but a small share of; and of their keeping of it even to perfection:

through breaking of the law dishonourest thou God?

sin sometimes is expressed by a word which signifies a “fall”; sometimes by another, which signifies missing of the mark, or straying from it; sometimes by another, which signifies a “contrariety to the law” of God; and here, by one which signifies a “passing over it”, and the bounds which it has set, as the rule of man’s obedience; and hereby God, the lawgiver, is dishonoured: for as God is glorified by good works, when rightly performed, he is dishonoured by evil ones; for his authority, as a lawgiver, is trampled upon and despised. Now persons guilty of such iniquities as here mentioned, could not be justified before God, or accepted by him on account of any works of righteousness done by them.

Romans 2:24

For the name of God is blasphemed

The being and perfections of God, such as his holiness, omniscience, and omnipotence, are denied, or evil spoken of; and also the law of God, and the forms of worship instituted by him:

among the Gentiles through you:

through their iniquities, who when they observe them, conclude that the God of Israel is not omniscient, or he would know, and take notice of these things; and that he is not holy, or he could not bear them; nor omnipotent, or he would revenge them:

as it is written;

the passage or passages referred to are not mentioned, but are perhaps (Isaiah 52:5) (Ezekiel 36:20 Ezekiel 36:23) . In the former of these texts the words are, “they that rule over them make them to howl; saith the Lord, and my name continually every day is blasphemed”; which are spoken of the rulers of the people, either of their ecclesiastical or political rulers, or both; and so Aben Ezra interprets them of (larvy ylwdg) , “the great men of Israel”; and here by the apostle are applied to their doctors and wise men: and in the latter are these words, “thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your

sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the Heathen”; that is, by their unbecoming walk and conversation, and especially by the disagreeable conduct of their principal men: and the Jews own the same things, and complain of them in much the “same language the apostle here does, saying, “they disgrace the law before the people of the earth, (the common people, or else the Gentiles,) how? a wise man sits and expounds in the congregation, saying, thou shalt not lend upon usury, and he lends upon usury; he says, thou shalt not commit a robbery, and he commits a robbery; he says, (bwngt al) , “thou shalt not steal, and he steals”: says R. Berechiah, it happened to one man that his cloak was stolen from him, and he went before the judge about it, and he found it spread upon his bed or couch: and, says the same Rabbi, it happened to a certain man that his pot was stolen from him, and he went before the judge about it, and he found it upon his hearth: hence it is said, “as they were increased they sinned against me, therefore will I change their glory into shame”, (Hosea 4:7) F4.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 236. 2.

Romans 2:25

For circumcision verily profiteth

The plea from circumcision in favour of the Jews, and their acceptance with God, and justification before him, is here, and in the following verses, considered. The apostle allows that circumcision was profitable; which must be understood whilst it was in force, before the abrogation of it, for since, it is not profitable but pernicious; and then it was only profitable, in case the law was kept:

if thou keepest the law;

that is, perfectly; for circumcision obliged persons to keep the whole law. Now the circumcised Jews did not keep it in such sense; wherefore circumcision was of no use to them, but, on the contrary, was an handwriting against them.

But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision;

that is, it is not accounted circumcision; it is of no avail; such a man was all one as an uncircumcised Gentile, and appeared to be uncircumcised in a spiritual sense: the apostle perhaps alludes to a practice among some of the Jews, to bring on and draw over the

foreskin, after they had been circumcised; (See Gill on 1 Corinthians 7:18).

Romans 2:26

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep

These words are spoken hypothetically; if any such persons could be found among the Gentiles who keep the whole law of God; and can only be absolutely understood of such, who from a principle of grace act in obedience to the law; as in the hands of Christ, and who look to Christ as the fulfilling end of it, for righteousness; in whom they keep

the righteousness of the law

perfectly:

shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

by this question it is suggested, that an uncircumcised Gentile, who keeps the law as in the hands of Christ, and under the influences of his Spirit and grace, and keeps it in Christ, is reckoned a circumcised person in a spiritual sense, and must be preferable to a circumcised Jew that breaks it.

Romans 2:27

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature

That is, the Gentiles, who are by nature uncircumcised; for as circumcision was by the command of God, and performed by the art of men, uncircumcision is by nature, and what men naturally have. Now

if it,
such persons,

fulfil the law
in Christ, they will

judge thee,
the circumcision: and condemn, as Noah condemned the old world, (Hebrews 11:7) , and the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south will condemn the men of that generation, in which Christ lived, (Matthew 12:41 Matthew 12:42) (Luke 11:31 Luke 11:32) .

Who by the letter and circumcision transgress the law;

that is, either by the law, which is “the letter”, and “by circumcision”, or “by circumcision which is in the letter”, (Romans 2:29) , sin being increased by the prohibitions

of the moral law, and the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the more so by a dependence upon an obedience to either of them, or both, for justification.

Romans 2:28

For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly

The apostle removes the plea in favour of the Jews, taken from their name and privilege, by distinguishing between a Jew and a Jew, and between circumcision and circumcision: "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly"; by mere name, nature, nation, religion, and profession:

neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh;

which takes away the flesh of the foreskin, but not the carnality of the heart; leaves a mark upon the flesh, but no impression on the mind. This is nothing, is not the true, solid, substantial, spiritual circumcision, which only avails in the sight of God.

Romans 2:29

But he is a Jew which is one inwardly

Who has an internal work of grace upon his soul: who has not only an outward name, but an inward nature; not the law of God in the hand, but in the heart; not an external righteousness only, but internal holiness; and who is not a mere outward court worshipper, but a worshipper of God in Spirit and in truth. The Jews have a F5 saying themselves,

“that whosoever denies idolatry, (ydwhy arqn) , “is called a Jew”.”

so that, according to them, this is a name that is not confined to themselves, but belongs to all such who truly fear and worship God; and they say, in the same place, that Pharaoh's daughter was called (tydwhy) , “a Jewess”, because she denied idolatry, and went down to wash herself from the idols of her father's house. And elsewhere F6,

“that faith does not depend upon circumcision, but upon the heart: he that believes not as he should, circumcision does not make him a Jew; and he that believes as he ought, he indeed is a Jew, though he is not circumcised.”

And circumcision is that of the heart;

which God requires, and he himself promises to give, (Deuteronomy 10:16) (30:6) (Jeremiah 4:4) ,

upon which last passage, a very noted Jew F7 has this observation, (blh tlm ayh taz) , “this is the circumcision of the heart”; the very phrase the apostle here uses: circumcision of the flesh was typical of this, which lies in a godly sorrow for sin, in a putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and in renouncing a man's own righteousness in the business of justification. The ancient Jews had some notion of this typical use of circumcision. So Philo the Jew says F8, that circumcision taught (hdonwn kai paywn pantwn ektomhn) , “the cutting off of all pleasures and affections”: and elsewhere he says F9: it is a symbol of two things particularly; the one is the cutting off of pleasures, as before; and the other is the removal of arrogancy, that grievous disease of the soul: and in another place F11 he calls purity, or chastity, (peritomhv peritomhn) , “the circumcision of circumcision”. Now this our apostle says is

in the spirit;

meaning either the spirit or soul of man, which is the seat and subject of it; or the Spirit of God, who is the author of it: the Ethiopic version reads it, “by the Holy Ghost”:

and not in the letter;

or “by the letter” of the law; but the Holy Ghost produces this spiritual work instrumentally, by the preaching of the Gospel. To which the apostle adds,

whose praise is not of men, but of God;

referring not to circumcision immediately spoken of before, but to the Jew who is one inwardly: and alludes to the name Judah, from whence the Jews are called, which comes from the word (hdy) , which signifies to “praise”; and intimates here, that such persons must not expect praise from men, who are only taken, with outward things, but from God, who searches and knows the heart.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 13. 1.

F6 Nizzachon ad Gen. xvii. Apud Maji Theolog. Jud. p. 252.

F7 R. David Kimchi in Jer. iv. 4.

F8 De Migrat. Abraham, p. 402.

F9 De Circumcisione, p. 811.

F11 De Somniis, p. 1111.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 3

In this chapter are an answer to several objections which follow one upon another, relating to what the

apostle had said concerning the equality of the Gentiles with the Jews; and various proofs out of the Psalms and Prophets, showing the general depravity and corruption of mankind, of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles; and the conclusion from all this, that there is no justification by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of God received by faith, of which a large and clear account is given. The first objection is in Ro 3:1 , and is taken from the unprofitableness of being a Jew and a circumcised person, if that is true which is asserted in the preceding chapter; to which an answer is given, Ro 3:2 , showing that though many things might be instanced in, in which the Jew had the advantage of the Gentile in external things; this might be mentioned as one for all, and taken sufficient answer, that the Jews had the oracles or word of God committed to their trust, by which they became acquainted with the will of God. The apostle foreseeing that another objection would arise upon this; what signifies their having the oracles of God, when these are not believed by them? prevents it by observing, Ro 3:3 , that though some did not believe, some did, and as for the unbelief of others, the truth and faithfulness of God in his word were not made void by it; however false and deceitful men are, God is always true to his word, Ro 3:4 , and which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture, cited out of Ps 51:4 , hence arises another objection, that if the righteousness of God is commended and illustrated by the unrighteousness of man, then it would be unjust in God to take vengeance on men for their sins, Ro 3:5 , which is removed with abhorrence, and answered by observing, that if there was any truth in it, the world could not be judged by God, as it certainly will, Ro 3:6 , but still the objection is continued and strengthened, Ro 3:7 , that if God is glorified through the sins of men, not only men ought not to be punished for them, but they should not be reckoned sinners, or as doers of evil things, but of good things, and be indulged in them; to which is replied, that this was the common calumny cast upon the doctrine of the apostle, and persons of such principles and practices are deserving of damnation, Ro 3:8 . Having removed these objections, the apostle reassumes his former assertion, and supports it, that a carnal circumcised Jew is no better than a carnal uncircumcised Gentile; it being already sufficiently made to appear, that they are both under the power and guilt of sin; and as a further evidence of it, he produces several passages out of the book of Psalms, and out of the prophecies of Isaiah, which fully express the sad corruption of human nature, and especially of the Jews;

and this account begins in Ro 3:10 , and ends in Ro 3:18 , and which account he suggests, Ro 3:19 , carries in it such a full conviction of the truth of what he had said, that all men are under sin, that no one would be able to open his mouth in his own defence, but all must acknowledge themselves guilty before God: and then he proceeds to the conclusion he meant to draw from all this, that there is no justification of any before God by the deeds of the law; giving this as a reason for it, because the law discovered sin, but not a justifying righteousness, Ro 3:20 , that is revealed in another way, by the Gospel, and not the law, though both law and prophets bear a testimony to it, Ro 3:21 , which righteousness is described by the author of it, God; by the means through which it comes to the use and comfort of men, the faith of Christ; and by the subjects of it, them that believe; in the justification of which there is no difference, Ro 3:22 , of which a reason is given, Ro 3:23 , taken from the general state of men, as sinners, and bereaved of the image of God: the several causes, ways, means, and end of the justification of such persons are suggested; the moving cause is the free grace of God, the meritorious or procuring cause the redemption that is in Christ, Ro 3:24 , and his propitiatory sacrifice, Ro 3:25 , which is owing to the eternal purpose of God, whose end in it was to declare his purity, holiness, and justice; which end is repeated and enlarged on, in Ro 3:26 , upon which the apostle asks, Ro 3:27 , what is become of boasting in the creature? and answers himself by saying, it was excluded, not by the doctrine of works, but by the doctrine of faith, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; wherefore the conclusion stands firm and just, from the premises, that justification is by faith without the works of the law, Ro 3:28 , and it is further confirmed, that Jews and Gentiles, with respect to their state and condition God-ward, are on a level; he is the God of the one, as well as of the other, Ro 3:29 , and this appears by his justifying both in one and the same way, through faith in the righteousness of this Son, Ro 3:30 , and the chapter is concluded by obviating an objection that might be made, that through this doctrine of justification by faith the law is made void, and is of no use, Ro 3:31 , to which the apostle answers, that this is so far from being fact, that the law is established by it. Ver 1. What advantage then hath the Jew ? &c.] If he is not properly a Jew, who is born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the customs, rites, and religion of the Jewish nation, but anyone of whatsoever nation, that

is born again of water, and of the Spirit; where is the superior excellency of the Jew to the Gentile? A man may as well be born and brought up a Heathen as a Jew; the one has no more advantages than the other by his birth and education: it may be rendered, “what hath the Jew more?” or “what has he superfluous” or “abundant?” the phrase answers to the Hebrew לאדמו מזה יתרונו in Ec 1:3, which is rendered, “what profit hath a man?” and in Ec 6:8, מזה יותר לחכמו, “what hath a wise man more” and in Ro 3:11, מזה יותר לאדמו, “what is a man better?” the first of these passages the Septuagint render by ~tiv perisseia ~, “what abundance?” and the last by ~ti ~ ~perisson ~, “what more”, or “superfluous”, or “abundant?” the phrase used by the apostle here: or what profit is there of circumcision? since that which is outward in the flesh profits not unless the law is kept, otherwise circumcision is no circumcision; and if an uncircumcised Gentile keeps the law, he is a better man than a circumcised Jew; yea, he judges and condemns him; for the only true circumcision is internal, spiritual, and in the heart. To this the apostle answers in the Ro 3:2.

ROMANS CHAPTER 3

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not

one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 3

Romans 3:1

What advantage then hath the Jew?

If he is not properly a Jew, who is born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the customs, rites, and religion of the Jewish nation, but anyone of whatsoever nation, that is born again of water, and of the Spirit; where is the superior excellency of the Jew to the Gentile? A man may as well be born and brought up a Heathen as a Jew; the one has no more advantages than the other by his birth and education: it may be rendered, “what hath the Jew more?” or “what has he superfluous” or “abundant?” the phrase answers to the Hebrew Mdal Nwrty hm in Ec 1:3, which is rendered, “what profit hath a man?” and in Ec 6:8, Mkxl rtwy hm, “what hath a wise man more”, &c. and in Ro 3:11, Mdal rty hm, “what is a man better?” the first of these passages the Septuagint render by tiv perisseia, “what abundance?” and the last by ti perisson, “what more”, or “superfluous”, or “abundant?” the phrase used by the apostle here:

or what profit is there of circumcision?

since that which is outward in the flesh profits not unless the law is kept, otherwise circumcision is no circumcision; and if an uncircumcised Gentile keeps the law, he is a better man than a circumcised Jew; yea, he judges and condemns him; for the only true circumcision is internal, spiritual, and in the heart. To this the apostle answers in the Ro 3:2.

Romans 3:2

Much every way

The circumcised Jew has greatly the advantage of the uncircumcised Gentile, (Mynp lkm), “in all respects”, (du lk le), “on every side”, as the Rabbins speak; phrases to which this in the text answers:

chiefly;

more especially, particularly, and in the first place;

because that unto them were committed the oracles of God;

by which are meant the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets, the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the prophecies of the Messiah and the Gospel church state; and in a word, all the books of the Old Testament, and whatsoever is contained in them; which are called so, because they are of divine

inspiration, contain the mind and will of God, and are infallible and authoritative: and it was the privilege and profit of the Jews that they were intrusted with them, when other nations were not, and so had the advantage of them; they had them for their own use; for hereby they had a more clear and distinct knowledge of God than the Gentiles could have by the light of nature; and besides, became acquainted with the doctrines of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of the sonship and deity of the Messiah, of the sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of the Redeemer, and of salvation by him; and also with the manner of worshipping of God according to his will; all which the Gentiles were ignorant of. Moreover, they had the honour of being the keepers of these sacred books, these divine oracles, and of transmitting them to posterity, for the use of others.

Romans 3:3

For what if some did not believe?

&c.] It is suggested, that though the Jews enjoyed such a privilege, some of them did not believe; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should have such means of light, knowledge, and faith, such clear and full evidences of things, and yet be incredulous: though it should be observed that this was the case only of some, not of all; and must be understood, not of their disbelief of the Scriptures being the word of God, for these were always received as such by them all, and were constantly read, heard, and attended to; but either of their disobedience to the commands of God required in the law, or of their disregard to the promises of God, and prophecies of the Messiah, and of their disbelief in the Messiah himself when he came; but now this was no objection to the advantage they had of the Gentiles, since this was not owing to want of evidence in the word of God, but to the darkness and unbelief of their minds: and,

shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

no, their unbelief could not, and did not make void the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promises concerning the Messiah, recorded in the oracles of God, which they had committed to them; for notwithstanding this, God raised up the Messiah from among them, which is another advantage the Jews had of, the Gentiles; inasmuch as “of” them, “as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for evermore”, (Romans 9:5), and he sent him to them, to

the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as a prophet and minister; he sent his Gospel to them first, and called out by it from among them his elect, nor did he take it from them until he had done this: and he took it away only; until “the fulness of the Gentiles”, (Romans 11:25) , is brought in; and then the Gospel shall come to them again with power, and “all Israel shall be saved” ((Romans 11:26)).

Romans 3:4

God forbid, yea, let God be true, but every man a liar

Let no such thing ever enter into the minds of any, that the truth of God can be, or will be made of none effect by the want of faith in man; let it be always asserted and abode by; that God is true, faithful to his word, constant in his promises, and will always fulfil his purposes; though “every man is a liar”, vain, fallacious, and inconstant: referring to (Psalms 116:11) ;

as it is written,
(Psalms 51:4) ;

that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

This is a proof that God is true, and stands to his word, though men are fallacious, inconstant, and wicked. God made a promise to David, that of the fruit of his body he would set upon his throne; that the Messiah should spring from him; that he would of his seed raise up unto Israel a Saviour. Now David sinned greatly in the case of Bathsheba, (2 Samuel 11:3 2 Samuel 11:4) (Psalms 51:1) (title), but his sin did not make of no effect the truth and faithfulness of God: though David showed himself to be a weak sinful man, yet God appeared true and faithful to every word of promise which he had sworn in truth to him; and therefore when he was brought to a sense of his evil, and at the same time to observe the invariable truth and faithfulness of God, said, “I acknowledge my transgression against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight”, (Psalms 51:3 Psalms 51:4) , which confession of sin I make, “that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings”; or “when thou speakest”, (Psalms 51:4) , which is all one; that is, that thou mightest appear to be just, and faithful, and true in all thy promises, in every word that is gone out of thy mouth, which shall not be recalled and made void, on account of my sins; for though I have sinned, thou abidest faithful; and this also I declare with shame to

myself, and with adoring views of thine unchangeable truth and goodness: “that thou mightest overcome”; that is, put to silence all such cavils and charges, as if the faith of God could be made void by the unfaithfulness of men: “when thou art judged”; when men will be so bold and daring to arraign thy truth and faithfulness, and contend with thee about them. This now is brought as a full proof, and is a full proof of this truth, that God is always true to his word, though men fail in theirs, and fall into sin. God kept his word with David concerning the stability of his kingdom, his successor, and the Messiah that should spring from him, though he acted a bad part against God. There is some little difference between these words as they stand in the Hebrew text of (Psalms 51:4) ; and as they are cited and rendered by the apostle, in the last clause of them; in the former it is, “that thou mightest be clear”; in the latter, “that thou mightest overcome”. Now to vindicate the apostle’s version, let it be observed, that the Hebrew word (זכה) signifies to “overcome”, as well as to “be clear”; of which instances may be given out of the Jewish writings. Says F12 Rabba; concerning an argument used by R. Chanina, in a controversy with other Rabbins, by this R. Chanina ben Antigonus, (זכנהו) , “hath overcome” them: and in another place F13, whosoever (דיכי) , “overcomes” a king, they cast him into an empty ditch; where the gloss upon it is, (xuwn) , he that overcomes a king by words, that is, by disputing with him, which is a disgrace to a king. So the word is used in the Syriac language in (John 16:33) (Luke 11:22) (Romans 12:21) (Hebrews 11:33) (1 John 2:13 1 John 2:14) (4:4) (5:4) . Moreover, the sense is the same, be it rendered either way; for as a man, when he overcomes his adversary, and carries his point against him, is clear of his charges and cavils, so God, when he overcomes in judgment, is clear of the imputations of wicked men. Another difference in the citation is, that what in the psalm is rendered “when thou judgest”, is by the apostle, “when thou art judged”, (Psalms 51:4) , the word, which is used by the Psalmist, (בשפט) , may be rendered either way; either “when thou judgest”, as a word of the same form is rendered, when “thou speakest”, in (Psalms 51:4) ; or “when anyone judges of thee”, or “when thou art judged”: a like instance is in (Psalms 46:2) ; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, though the word he uses may be considered in the middle voice, and may have an active signification in it; and the phrase, (en tw krinesyai se) , may be rendered, “when thou judgest”, and then both agree.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 T. Bab. Niddah, fol. 52. 2.

F13 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1. & Becorot, fol. 8. 2.

Romans 3:5

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God,

&c.] Hence it appears, that the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness, or faithfulness of God; and yet all unrighteousness is sin; the wrath of God is revealed against it; and would exclude from heaven, were it not for pardon through the blood of Christ; and besides, the one is contrary to the other, and of itself, of its own nature, cannot influence and affect the other: wherefore this can only be understood of the manifestation and illustration of, the righteousness of God by it; which is covered and commended, in punishing the unrighteousness of men; in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation for sin; and in fulfilling his promises, notwithstanding the failings of his people, of which the case of David is a pregnant proof; just as the love of God is illustrated and commended, by the consideration of the sins of men, for whom Christ died, and his grace and mercy in the conversion of them: but if this be true,

what shall we say?

shall we allow the following question to be put? this answers to (rmym l akya yam) , “what is there to say”, or “to be said?” a way of speaking, often used by the Talmudists F14:

is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance?

if the premises are true, this is a just consequence of them; whereas God does take vengeance on men for their unrighteousness, both here and hereafter, it must be a piece of unrighteousness in him so to do; since that for which he takes vengeance on them commends his own righteousness; but that you may know as well by what follows, that this is not an inference of his own, but another’s, he adds,

I speak as a man;

(Mda ynb Nwv lk) , “according to the language of the children of men”, a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors F15. The apostle did not speak the sentiments of his own mind, he represented another man, and spoke in the language of an adversary.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & passim.

F15 T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 11. 1. & passim.

Romans 3:6

God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world?

] (חלילה) , “far be it”; such a notion is detestable and abominable, nor can it be fairly deduced from what is asserted; for it is the unrighteousness of his own people, on whom he takes no vengeance personally, and not the unrighteousness of others, on whom he does take vengeance, which commends his righteousness; and supposing it was that of others, God cannot be unrighteous in performing his threatenings, in a way of righteousness: moreover, unrighteousness is sin, and does not of itself but by accident, illustrate the righteousness of God; wherefore God is not unjust in punishing it; for how should God “judge the world?” whereas nothing is more certain than that he will do it, and that this will be done in righteousness; which could not be, was he unrighteous in taking vengeance; which will be one considerable part of that righteous judgment.

Romans 3:7

For if the truth of God

The “truth of God” is the same with “the righteousness of God”, (Romans 3:5) , and means his faithfulness; of which it is hypothetically said, it

hath more abounded;

or has been more illustrated,

through my lie to his glory:

nothing is more opposite to truth than a lie; a lie of itself can never be of any advantage to truth, or to the God of truth; nothing is more contrary to the nature of God, and more abominable to him; a lie is of the devil, and punishable with eternal death; wherefore it may seem strange, that the truth of God should abound through it to his glory: now let it be observed, that the apostle is not speaking of himself, nor of his lie of unbelief, in his state of unregeneracy; but in the person of a sinful man, “for every man is a liar”, (Romans 3:4) , as he says, “I speak as a man”, (Romans 3:5) ; representing a wicked man, who from what was before said, might collect this as the sense of it, that the truth of God is illustrated by the lies of men: and so much may

be owned as the apostle's sense, that the truth of God is commended, illustrated, and made to abound, when it is asserted, that he is true and faithful, and every man is a liar, fallacious, and deceitful; "let God be true, and every man a liar", (Romans 3:4) : moreover, the truth of God may be allowed to abound through the lies of men, in a comparative sense, the one being set against the other; and so as contraries do, illustrate each other: this may be assented to, as that sometimes a lie has been overruled by God, for the accomplishing of his purposes and promises, in which his truth and faithfulness have been displayed, as in the cases of Jacob and the Egyptian midwives; but then this does not arise from its nature and tendency, but from the overruling wisdom and providence of God, and therefore not to be excused hereby from sin; and consequently the inference from it is not just, that therefore "no man can, or ought to be, judged as a sinner"; since his sin turns to such account, as to make for the glory of God, which is intimated in the question:

why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

if this be the case, I ought not to be reckoned a sinner, or to be treated as such here, or judged and condemned as one hereafter, which is a most wicked, as well as weak consequence; for though God is true and faithful to his promises, notwithstanding the sins of his people, which are as a foil, to set off the lustre of his truth the more, yet their sins are nevertheless sins, and are taken notice of by him as such, and they are corrected for them; and however God may overrule, in a providential way, the sins of others for his glory, this is no excuse for their sins, nor will it be an exemption of them from punishment. This is the sense of the passage; unless by "the truth of God" should be meant, the Gospel, the word of truth, which is of God; and which through the apostle's "lie", as the Jews might call his ministration of it, "abounded to" the "glory" of God; being spread far and near, and made useful for the conversion of sinners, for turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and for the planting of churches in the Gentile world, as well as in Judea; which much conduced to the honour of God, and the interest of true religion: and then the meaning of the last clause is, "why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" why am I accounted and condemned as an heretic? as an apostate from the faith? as he was by the Jews, and who are used to call heretics sinners: so "the sinner" in (Ecclesiastes 7:26) is thus interpreted F16,

(Mynymh wla) "these are the heretics": and elsewhere it F17 is observed, that concerning the heretics it is said, (Proverbs 10:7) , "the name of the wicked shall rot": and I very much suspect this to be the sense of the word in (John 9:24) , "we know that this man is a sinner"; an heretic, a man of bad principles; and in (John 9:31) ; "now we know that God heareth not sinners"; men of corrupt minds; since this character stands opposed to a worshipper of the God of Israel.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 1.

F17 Juchasin, fol. 130. 2.

Romans 3:8

And not rather, as we be slanderously reported

These are the apostle's own words, in answer to the objector he represented; and it is as if he should say, why do not you go on? why do you stop here? "and not rather" say, as we are evil spoken of, and our doctrine is blasphemed:

and as some affirm;

ignorantly and audaciously enough:
that we say;
and teach:

let us do evil that good may come;

a slander cast upon the apostle's doctrine of unconditional election, free justification, and of God's overruling the sins of men for good; and is the same which is cast on ours now, and is no small proof of the likeness and sameness of doctrines:

whose damnation is just;

whose judgment would have been right, and their censure of our doctrines just, had it been true that we held such a principle, taught such a doctrine, or encouraged such a practice: or their condemnation is just, for aspersing our principles and practices in so vile a manner; and all such persons are deserving of damnation, who teach such things, or practise after this sort.

Romans 3:9

What then? are we better than they?

&c.] The apostle returns to what he was treating of in the beginning of the chapter, and suggests, that though the Jew has the advantage of the Gentile, with respect to some external privileges, yet not with regard to their

state and condition God-ward, and as in his sight; "are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]?"

no, in no wise;

upon no consideration whatever, neither as men, nor as Jews; which is directly opposite to a notion that people have of themselves:

``in mankind (they say F18) there are high degrees, one higher than another, and the Israelites (Mda Nym lkm hleml) , "are above all mankind"; they are the head, and the nations of the world are the tail, and are like to a serpent, for they come from the filth of the old serpent."

Again, they say F19,

``worthy are the Israelites, for the holy blessed God hath given to them holy souls, from an holy place, "above all the rest of the people", that they may do the commandments, and delight in the law."

And elsewhere F20 it is observed on those words, (Genesis 1:24) , "the living creature", or "the soul of the living creature", by R. Aba:

``these are the Israelites, for they are the children of the holy blessed God, and their holy souls come from him; the souls of the rest of the people, from what place are they? says R. Eleazar, from the side of the left hand, which is defiled; for they have polluted souls, and therefore they are all defiled, and defile whoever comes nigh them:"

but they are no better, especially with regard to their estate by nature:

for we have before proved;

in the preceding chapters, by full instances to a demonstration; and if that cannot be thought sufficient, he goes on to give more proof in the following "verses":

that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin;

under the power and guilt of sin, and a sentence of condemnation for it; which is equally true of the Jews, who were no better than the Gentiles, for being Abraham's seed, for being circumcised, for having the ceremonial law, and other outward privileges; for they were equally born in sin, and by practice sinners, as the Gentiles: and this is true of God's elect in all nations, who are no better by nature, by birth, than others; as

deserving of the wrath of God as the rest; no better in their tempers and, dispositions, or in the endowments of their minds, or outward circumstances of life; nor better qualified to receive and improve the grace of God bestowed on them, than others.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 103. 2. Vid. Nishmat Chayim, orat. 2. c. 7. fol. 61. 1.

F19 Zohar in Lev. fol. 28. 2.

F20 Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1.

Romans 3:10

As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.

] The several passages cited here, and in some following verses, are taken out of the Psalms and Isaiah; and are brought to prove, not only that the Jews are no better than the Gentiles, being equally corrupt and depraved as they; but also to show the corrupt state and condition of mankind in general: and the words are not always literally expressed, but the sense is attended to, as in this passage; for in the original text of (Psalms 14:1) , it is, "there is none that doth good"; from whence the apostle rightly infers, "there is none righteous"; for he that does not do good, is not righteous; and therefore if there is none on earth that does good and does not sin, there is none righteous upon earth, "no, not one" single person. The Jews allegorizing that passage in (Genesis 19:31) , "there is not a man in the earth to come into us", remark F21 on it thus,

``(אינ איש דיק באר) , "there is not a righteous man in the earth"; and there is not a man that rules over his imagination."

There is none righteous as Adam was, in a state of innocence; for all have sinned, and are filled with unrighteousness, and are enemies to righteousness; none are righteous by their obedience to the law of works; nor are there any righteous in the sight of God, upon the foot of their own righteousness, however they may appear in their own eyes, and in the sight of others; nor are any inherently righteous, for there is none without sin, sanctification is imperfect; nor is it, either in whole or in part, a saint's justifying righteousness; indeed there is none righteous, no, not one, but those who are justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 1.

Romans 3:11**There is none that understandeth**

This is rightly concluded, from what the Psalmist says, (Psalms 14:2) , “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men”, on all the children of men, Jews and Gentiles, “to see if there were any that did understand”; and it appears, upon this survey of them, there was not one understanding person among them: man thinks himself a very wise and understanding creature, though he is born a very ignorant one: true indeed, he has not lost by sin the natural faculty of the understanding, so as to become like the horse and mule, which are without any; and it must be allowed, that natural men have some understanding of things natural, civil, and moral; though there is none that understands even these, as Adam did: but then they have no understanding of things spiritual; no spiritual knowledge of God; no true sense of themselves, their sin and misery; nor do they truly know the way of salvation by Christ; nor have they any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; nor any experimental knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel: no man can understand these of himself, by the mere strength of reason, and light of nature; nor can even a spiritual man fully understand them in this life; in consequence of this account and character of men it follows, that

there is none that seeketh after God;

that worships him in Spirit and in truth, or prays to him with the Spirit, and with the understanding; who seek him chiefly, and in the first place, with their whole hearts, earnestly, diligently, and constantly; who seek him in Christ, and under the assistance of the Spirit; who seek after the knowledge of God in Christ, communion with him through the Mediator, or his honour and glory.

Romans 3:12**They are all gone out of the way**

In (Psalms 14:3) ; it is said, “they are all gone aside”; as persons in debt: man had a considerable stock of righteousness, holiness, knowledge but he has run through all, has contracted large and numerous debts, has been obliged to hide himself, has been used as a bankrupt, and turned out of house and home: Christ indeed has undertook to pay, and he has paid all the

debts of his people; and has put them into a better state than ever Adam was in: in (Psalms 53:3) , it is rendered, “everyone of them is gone back”; that is, from God; from his commands, and from their former state and condition: here the phrase is rendered by the apostle, “they are all gone out of the way”: that is, out of the way of God and his precepts, out of the way of holiness and righteousness, of light and life; into their own ways, the ways of sin, Satan, and the world of darkness, and of death: so Aben Ezra explains it, “out of the right way”; Kimchi and Ben Melech paraphrase it, “out of the good way: and so”

they are together become unprofitable;

the word (נִאֲלָחוּ , in (Psalms 14:3) and (Psalms 53:3) ; is translated, “they are become filthy”; which R. Aben Ezra interprets by (נִשְׁחָחוּ) , “they are corrupt”; and R. Solomon Jarchi by (נִהַפְּכוּ לִקְלִקְלִי) , “they are turned to corruption”; the metaphor is taken from stinking flesh, which is tainted and corrupted, and so good for nothing, hence here rendered “unprofitable”; for so men being corrupted by sin, are of no use, service, and advantage to God, to men, or to themselves; but, on the contrary, nauseous to God, and to all that are good, and hurtful to themselves and others: for

there is none that does good, no, not one;

and therefore must be unprofitable. There is none that can do good in a spiritual manner, without the grace of God, strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit; and there is not even a spiritual man, that can do good perfectly, and without sin.

Romans 3:13**Their throat is an open sepulchre**

The several vices of the instruments of speech are here, and in the following verse, exposed: “the throat” is said to “be an open sepulchre”, as in (Psalms 5:9) , so called, for its voracity and insatiableness; both as an instrument of speech, for the words of the wicked are devouring ones; and as an instrument of swallowing, and so may denote the sinner’s eager desire after sin, the delight and pleasure he takes in it, the abundance of it he takes in, and his insatiable greediness for it; likewise for its filthy stench, the communication of evil men being corrupt; and because, as by an open grave, persons may fall unawares to their hurt, so the evil communications of wicked men, as they corrupt good manners, are dangerous and hurtful: R. Aben Ezra explains it by (נִידָר)

(נִידָר) , “immediate destruction”, or sudden death:

with their tongues they have used deceit;

which may design the sin of flattery, for the words in (Psalms 5:9) ; the place referred to, are, “they flatter with their tongue”; either God or men, themselves or others, their princes or their neighbour; for there are flatterers in things sacred and civil, there are self-flatterers, court flatterers, and flattering preachers, and all abominable and mischievous; or the phrase may design the sin of lying, either politically, officiously, perniciously, and religiously; and in this latter way, either with respect to doctrine or practice:

the poison of asps is under their lips;

or as in (Psalms 140:3) , “adders’ poison is under their lips”. The asp is but a small creature, and so is the tongue, (James 3:5) , but there is a world of mischief in it, signified by poison; which, as that, is latent and secret, is under it; and as that stupefies and kills insensibly, so an evil tongue does, and that in a deadly and incurable manner: oftentimes the Jews speak of the evil imagination, or corruption of nature entering into persons, and operating in them, (owekb orak) “as poison in an angry serpent” F23.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 62. 2. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

Romans 3:14**Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.**

] These words are taken from (Psalms 10:7) , by cursing is meant, cursing of God, which is sometimes internal with the heart, and sometimes external with the mouth, as here; and of all good men, though without cause, and to no purpose with respect to the persons they curse, since God has blessed them, and they are blessed, and greatly to their own detriment, for, in the issue, their curses will be turned against themselves. There is also a cursing of superiors, as parents, masters, magistrates, kings, and governors; which is a sore evil, and attended with bad consequences; likewise of themselves, and their fellow creatures: and “the mouth [being] full [of it]”, denotes the frequency of the sin; scarce anything else comes out of it but cursing; which discovers the sad corruption of the heart; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”, (Matthew 12:34) (Luke 6:45) . By “bitterness” is meant, either sin in general, which is “an evil and bitter [thing]”, (Jeremiah 2:19) , in its nature and effects; or sinful words, such as oaths,

curses, imprecations, all wrathful and deceitful words.

Romans 3:15**Their feet are swift to shed blood.**

The sins of the heart and mouth are before described, and now the sins of action are taken notice of; for “the feet” are the instruments of motion and action: and when these are said to be “swift to shed blood”, it denotes the readiness and eagerness of men, to murder innocent creatures; which shows the dreadful malice and hatred that is in them. The words are cited from (Isaiah 59:7) , and seem to point at the times of Manasseh, who shed so much innocent blood, as to fill Jerusalem with it from one end to the other.

Romans 3:16

Destruction and misery are in their ways.

This passage also is to be found in (Isaiah 59:7) , and may be understood either actively thus: all the ways they take, and methods they pursue, are to make their fellow creatures miserable, to ruin and destroy them; or passively, that by their sinful ways and vicious course of life, they themselves are brought to destruction and misery: the way they are walking in is, “the broad way, that leadeth to destruction”, (Matthew 7:13) ; the end of it, what it issues in, is eternal death, the destruction of the body and soul in hell, which will be attended with endless and inexpressible misery.

Romans 3:17**And the way of peace have they not known.**

This is a citation front (Isaiah 59:8) , and expresses the ignorance of mankind, with regard to true peace, and the way unto it: men are naturally ignorant of the way of peace with God; of the first step which God took towards it; of the council and covenant of peace, in which the scheme of it was drawn, and the method fixed; of Christ the peacemaker, and of the way in which he has made it; and of the Gospel, which reveals and publishes it. They are ignorant of the true way of enjoying peace of conscience; they have no true peace of mind, their consciences are often tortured; and though they may have a stupid and secure peace, yet nothing that is true, real, and solid; for they are without the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and without faith in Christ, by which true peace only is enjoyed; nor are they spiritually minded, which is life and peace; nor have they any knowledge of the way to have it; they are ready to think it must be had by doing something of their own, and not that it is

to be had only in Christ, in his blood and righteousness. They are ignorant of the paths of wisdom, which are peace; peace is enjoyed in them, they lead unto it, and issue in it: they know not the way to eternal peace; they imagine something done by the creature is the way; and are ignorant that Christ is the only way of salvation, the true way to eternal life, everlasting peace and happiness: yea, they know not the way of peace among men, and one another; nor will they do that which is just and right, in order to support and maintain it, but are unjust, deceitful, and quarrelsome; they do not study peace, but rather contention, which they like and approve of. The Jews talk F24 much of their good nature, affability, and condescension, and of their doing this and that, and the other thing, (מפני דרכי שלום) , “because of the ways of peace”.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 8, 9. T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 24. 1. Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 5.

Romans 3:18

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The place referred to is (Psalms 36:1) , by the “fear of God”, is not meant a fear of God’s wrath, of hell and damnation; nor a fearful distrust of his presence, power, providence, and grace; much less an hypocritical fear; but a reverential affection for God, and which is peculiar to the children of God, which springs from a sense of divine goodness, is attended with holiness of heart and life, is consistent with faith, even full assurance of it, and with spiritual joy in its highest degree; it stands opposed to pride and haughtiness, and is a blessing of the covenant of grace: now this is not to be found in unregenerate men, for this springs from grace, and not nature, and is only implanted in the heart in conversion; it appears from the whole life and conversation of unconverted men, that the fear of God is not in their hearts, nor before their eyes.

Romans 3:19

Now we know that what things soever the law saith

By “the law” is meant, not the law of nature, nor the civil law of nations, nor the ceremonial law of the Jews, nor barely the five books of Moses, nor the book of Psalms, of the Prophets, or the writings of the whole Old Testament; but the moral law, as it appears in the whole

word of God, which every man is bound to observe, of which all are transgressors, by which is the knowledge of sin, which no man can be justified by, and which Christ was made under, and came to fulfil. This law is represented as a person speaking, and saying many things, some of which are here mentioned; so, (hrwt hrma) , “the law says” so and so, is an usual phrase with Jewish writers F25. The persons it speaks to, are

them that are under the law;

the Jews were in a peculiar sense under it, as it was given to them by Moses; all mankind are under it, as to the matter of it; they are under obligation to obedience to it, and, through disobedience, come under its sentence of condemnation. The elect of God themselves were, and are in some sense under it; not indeed as a covenant of works, or as in the hands of Moses, nor as a yoke of bondage; nor are they obliged to seek for justification by it, and are entirely delivered from the curse and condemnation of it by Christ. They were under it, and that as a covenant of works, as in Adam, the federal head and representative of all mankind; and came under its sentence of condemnation and death, for his sin, and their own actual transgressions; which is consistent with the everlasting love of God to them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with them in him, as their head and surety, and their justification by him: and they are now under it, as in the hands of Christ; and look upon themselves as obliged, by the love of Christ, to yield a cheerful obedience to it: here it means such as are transgressors of the law, and so under obligation to punishment, without any regard to Jew or Gentile, or any distinction God has made in his own breast: and the things it says to such are, it charges them with sin, and convicts them of it, both of its pollution and guilt: so

that every mouth may be stopped;

and have nothing to say of the purity of their nature, which appears to be so sadly stained; nor of their works of righteousness, which are so few, and so very imperfect. The law makes such a representation of things to them, that their mouths are stopped from glorying in themselves, and in their works, which are far from being adequate to the demands of the law; and from complaining against the righteous judgment of God, should he proceed against them in the most rigorous manner:

and all the world may become guilty before God; Jews and Gentiles; all the individuals of mankind

are guilty before God, and will be found to be so, sooner or later: some read it, “subject to God”, and understand it of a subjection to his grace, being brought to see their need of it, and of salvation by it; but this is not the case of all the world, rather (upodikov) , signifies a subjection to that justice, vengeance, and wrath of God, to which all men are liable in their own persons; since they are all found guilty by the law, and will appear to be so, and therefore can never be justified by their obedience to it; which is what the apostle is aiming at in all he here says, as appears from what follows; all which “we know” to be true, and are fully assured of, who know the nature and spirituality of the law, and to whom it has come with light and power.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 1. Taanith, fol. 21. 2.

Romans 3:20

Therefore by the deeds of the law

Hence it most clearly appears, that there can be no justification before God by the law, since it stops the mouths of men, and pronounces them guilty: by “the deeds of the law” are meant, works done in obedience to it, as performed by sinful men, which are very imperfect; not as performed by Adam in innocence or by Christ in our nature whose works were perfect; but as performed by sinful men and of themselves, and not as performed in and by Christ for them who is the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to all believers: now by such works as these whether wrought before or after conversion, with or without the strength and grace of Christ,

there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:

that is, no one person: “flesh” designs men, and men as corrupt and carnal, in opposition to God, who is a Spirit pure and holy; and may have respect to the vain opinion of Jews and Gentiles, who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind; the one on account of their wisdom and learning, the other on account of their righteousness; and includes all the individuals of human nature: the word “justified”, does not signify being made righteous by the infusion of righteousness, for the infusion of a righteousness, or holiness, is sanctification, which is a work of the Spirit of God, is internal, and imperfect, and so not justifying; but it is a forensic word, or legal term, and stands opposed to a being condemned; and signifies to be acquitted,

discharged, and made righteous in a legal sense, which can never be done by an imperfect obedience to the law: men may be justified hereby in their own sight, and in the sight of others, but not in “his sight”; in the sight of God, who is omniscient, and sees not as man seeth; who is pure, holy, and righteous, and whose judgment is according to truth: this is said in direct contradiction to the Jews F26, who say,

“a man is not justified for ever, but by the words of the law:”

but in his sight none can be justified, but by the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ. The reason for it is,

for by the law is the knowledge of sin;

it discovers to a man, by the light of the Spirit of God, and as under his influence, and attended with his power, the sins both of his heart and life; and so he is convinced by it as a transgressor and finds himself guilty, and liable to condemnation and death; wherefore he can never hope for and expect justification by it. The Jews ascribe such an use as this to the law, which they suppose it performs in a very gentle manner;

“he that rises in the night (say they F1), and studies in the law, (אוריתא קא מורא ליה חובה) , “the law makes known to him his sin”, but not in a way of judgment, but as a mother makes known to her son in tender language:”

but this is generally done in a rougher way, for the law works wrath.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 3.

F1 Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 2.

Romans 3:21

But now the righteousness of God

The apostle having proved that all men are unrighteous, and that no man can be justified in the sight of God by his obedience, either to the law of nature or of Moses, proceeds to give an account of that righteousness, which does justify before God; and so returns to his former subject, (Romans 1:17) , concerning “the righteousness of God”, the revelation of which he makes to be peculiar to the Gospel, as he does here; since he says, that it

without the law is manifested:

meaning, either that this righteousness is without the law, and the deeds of it, as performed by sinful men; or that the manifestation of it is without the law, either of nature or of Moses; for the law discovers sin, but not a righteousness which justifies from sin; it shows what righteousness is, but does not direct the sinner where there is one to be had, that will make him righteous in the sight of God: this is made known without the law, and only in the Gospel:

being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

a testimony is borne to the justifying righteousness of Christ both “by the law”, particularly in the five books of Moses; which testify of Christ, of his obedience, sufferings, and death, by which he brought in life and righteousness; see (Genesis 3:15) , compared with (Daniel 9:24) ; and (Genesis 15:6) with (Romans 4:9 Romans 4:10 Romans 4:22-25) ; and (Genesis 22:18) with (Galatians 3:8 Galatians 3:9 Galatians 3:14) ; and (Deuteronomy 30:11-14) with (Romans 10:5-10) . And the prophets; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others; see (Isaiah 42:21) (Isaiah 45:24 Isaiah 45:25) (Isaiah 46:12 Isaiah 46:13) (Isaiah 51:5 Isaiah 51:6 Isaiah 51:8) (53:11) (Jeremiah 23:6) (Daniel 9:24) .

Romans 3:22

Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ

A further account is given of this righteousness: why it is called “the righteousness of God”, and in what sense revealed and manifested, (See Gill on Romans 1:17); Here it is said to be “by faith of Jesus Christ”; not by that faith which Christ himself had as man, but by that faith, of which he the author and object: the Alexandrian copy reads, “by faith in Jesus Christ”; and not by that as the cause of justification; for faith is neither the efficient, nor the moving, nor meritorious cause of it; no, nor the instrumental cause of it on the part of God or Christ: nor is faith the matter of a justifying righteousness; for faith is a part of sanctification, is itself imperfect, is a man’s own, as it is implanted in him, and exercised by him; is here and elsewhere distinguished from righteousness; something else, and not that, as the obedience and blood of Christ, are said to be what men are made righteous and justified by: but faith is a means of apprehending and receiving righteousness; it views the excellency of Christ’s righteousness; it owns the sufficiency of it; the soul by it renounces its own righteousness, submits to Christ’s, rejoices in it, and gives him the glory of it: now

this is by, or through faith,

unto all, and upon all:

not all men, for all have not faith, nor are all justified and saved: but

all that believe;

which must be understood, not of believing any thing, nor of any sort of believing; but of such, who truly and with the heart believe in Christ for salvation; and who are here opposed to the wise philosophers among the Gentiles, had to all self-righteous persons among the Jews. Though this character does not design any cause or condition of justification, but is only descriptive of the persons, who are declaratively interested in a justifying righteousness, which is said to be “unto”, and “upon them”; that is, it is appointed, provided, and wrought out for them, and directed and applied unto them, and put upon them as a garment, and that upon all of them:

for there is no difference;

of nation, age, or sex, or of state and condition; no respect is had to persons or works; nor is there any difference with respect to weak or strong believers; the righteousness is equally applied to one as to another, and one is as much justified by it in the sight of God as another.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned

This is the general character of all mankind; all have sinned in Adam, are guilty by his sin, polluted with it, and condemned for it; all are sinners in themselves, and by their own actual transgressions; this is the case of the whole world, and of all the men in it; not only of the Gentiles, but of the Jews, and the more righteous among them: hence there is no difference in the state and condition of men by nature; nor is there any reason from and in themselves, why God saves one and not another; nor any room to despair of the grace and righteousness of Christ, on account of persons being, in their own view, the worst of sinners:

and

hence it is, that they are all

come short of the glory of God;

either of glorifying of God; man was made for this purpose, and was capable of it, though now through sin incapable; and it is only by the grace of God that he is enabled to do it: or of glorying: before him; sin has made

him infamous, and is his shame; by it he has forfeited all external favours, and has nothing of his own to glory in; his moral righteousness is no foundation for boasting, especially before God: or of having glory from God; the most pure and perfect creature does not of itself deserve any glory and praise from God; good men, in a way of grace, will have praise of God; but sinners can never expect any on their own account: or of the glorious grace of God, as sanctifying and pardoning grace, and particularly the grace of a justifying righteousness; man has no righteousness, nor can he work out one; nor will his own avail, he wants a better than that: or of eternal glory; which may be called the glory of God, because it is of his preparing, what he calls persons to by his grace, and which of his own free grace he bestows upon them, and will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of him; now this is represented sometimes as a prize, which is run for, and pressed after; but men, through sinning, come short of it, and must of themselves do so for ever: or rather of the image of God in man, who is called “the image and glory of God”, (1 Corinthians 11:7) , which consisted externally in government over the creatures; internally, in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge, in the bias of his mind to that which is good, and in power to perform it; of all which he is come short, or deprived by sinning.

Romans 3:24

Being justified freely by his grace

The matter of justification is before expressed, and the persons that share in this blessing are described; here the several causes of it are mentioned. The moving cause of it is the free grace of God; for by “the grace of God” here, is not meant the Gospel, or what some men call the terms of the Gospel, and the constitution of it; nor the grace of God infused into the heart; but the free love and favour of God, as it is in his heart; which is wonderfully displayed in the business of a sinner’s justification before him: it appears in his resolving upon the justification of his chosen ones in Christ; in fixing on the method of doing it; in setting forth and pre-ordaining Christ to be the ransom; in calling Christ to engage herein; in Christ’s engaging as a surety for his people, and in the Father’s sending him to bring in everlasting righteousness; in Christ’s coming to do it, and in the gracious manner in which he wrought it out; in the Father’s gracious acceptation, imputation, and donation of it; in the free gift of the grace of faith, to

apprehend and receive it; and in the persons that partake of it, who are of themselves sinners and ungodly. The meritorious cause of justification is,

the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

redemption supposes a former state of captivity to sin, Satan, and the law, in which God’s elect were by nature, and is a deliverance from it; it is of a spiritual nature, chiefly respects the soul, and is plenteous, complete, and eternal: this is in and by Christ; he was called unto it, was sent to effect it, had a right unto it, as being the near kinsman; and was every way fit for it, being both God and man; and has by his sufferings and death obtained it: now, as all the blessings of grace come through redemption by Christ, so does this of justification, and after this manner; Christ, as a Redeemer, had the sins of his people laid on him, and they were bore by him, and took away; the sentence of the law’s condemnation was executed on him, as standing in their legal place and stead; and satisfaction was made by him for all offences committed by them, which was necessary, that God might appear to be just, in justifying all them that believe: nor is this any objection or contradiction to the free grace of God, in a sinner’s justification; since it was grace in God to provide, send, and part with his Son as a Redeemer, and to work out righteousness; it was grace in Christ, to come and give himself a sacrifice, and obtain salvation and righteousness, not for angels, but for men, and for some of them, and not all; and whatever this righteousness, salvation, and redemption cost Christ, they are all free to men.

Romans 3:25

Whom God had set forth to be a propitiation

Redemption by Christ is here further explained, by his being “a propitiation”: which word may design either Christ the propitiator, the author of peace and reconciliation; or the propitiatory sacrifice, by which he is so; and both in allusion to the mercy seat, which was a type of him as such. The apostle here uses the same word, which the Septuagint often render (trpk) “the mercy seat”, by; and Philo the Jew calls it by the same name, and says it was a symbol, (thv ilew tou) (yeou dunamewv) “of the propitious power of God” F2. Christ is the propitiation to God for sin; which must be understood of his making satisfaction to divine justice, for the sins of his people; these were imputed to him, and being found on him, the law and justice of God made demands on him for them; which he answered to satisfaction, by his

obedience and sacrifice; and which, as it could not be done by any other, nor in any other way, is expressed by “reconciliation”, and “atonement”: whence God may be said to be pacified, or made propitious; not but that he always loved his people, and never hated them; nor is there, nor can there be any change in God, from hatred to love, any more than from love to hatred: Christ has not, by his sacrifice and death, procured the love and favour of God, but has removed the obstructions which lay in the way of love’s appearing and breaking forth; there was, a law broken, and justice provoked, which were to be attended to, and Christ by his sacrifice has satisfied both; so that neither the wrath of God, nor any of the effects of it, can fall upon the persons Christ is the propitiation for, even according to justice itself; so that it is not love, but justice that is made propitious: for this is all owing to the grace and goodness of God, who “hath set him forth”, for this intent, in his eternal purposes and decrees; in the promises of the Old Testament, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law; by the exhibition of him in our nature, and in the ministration of the Gospel; and this is said to be

through faith in his blood.

The “blood” of Christ is that, by which Christ is the propitiation; for without the shedding of that blood, there is no redemption, no peace, no reconciliation, or remission of sin; and “faith” in his blood is the means by which persons become partakers of the benefits of his propitiation; such as peace, pardon, atonement, justification, and adoption: and the end of Christ’s being set forth as a propitiation, on the part of God’s people, is,

for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:

by “sins that are past”, are meant, not sins before baptism, nor the sins of a man’s life only, but the sins of Old Testament saints, who lived before the incarnation of Christ, and the oblation of his sacrifice; and though this is not to be restrained to them only, for Christ’s blood was shed for the remission of all his people’s sins, past, present, and to come; yet the sins of the saints before the coming of Christ, seem to be particularly designed; which shows the insufficiency of legal sacrifices, sets forth the efficacy of Christ’s blood and sacrifice, demonstrates him to be a perfect Saviour, and gives us reason under the present dispensation to hope for pardon, since reconciliation is completely made: “remission” of sin does not design that weakness which

sin has brought upon, and left in human nature, whereby it is so enfeebled, that it cannot help itself, and therefore Christ was set forth, and sent forth, to be a propitiation; but rather God’s passing by, or overlooking sin, and not punishing for it, under the former dispensation; or else the forgiveness of it now, and redemption from it by the blood of Christ, “through the forbearance of God”; in deferring the execution of justice, till he sent his Son, and in expecting satisfaction of his Son; which shows the grace and goodness of God to his people, and the trust and confidence he put in his Son: the other end on the part of God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation, was

to declare his righteousness

(Psalms 22:31) ; meaning either the righteousness of Christ, which was before hid, but now manifested; or rather the righteousness of God the Father, his faithfulness in his promises relating to Christ, his grace and goodness in the mission of his Son, the holiness and purity of his nature, and his vindictive justice, in avenging sin in his own Son, as the surety of his people: the execution of this was threatened from the beginning; the types and sacrifices of the old law prefigured it; the prophecies of the Old Testament express it; and the sufferings and death of Christ openly declare it, since God spared not his own Son, but sheathed the sword of justice in him.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness

This end is further explained, it being to declare the righteousness of God “at this time”, under the Gospel dispensation; in which there was such a display of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God:

that he might be just;

that is, appear to be so: God is naturally and essentially just in himself; and he is evidentially so in all his works, particularly in redemption by Christ; and when and while he is

the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:

Jesus, the Saviour, is the object of faith, as he is the Lord our righteousness; the believer in Jesus is a real, and not a nominal one; God is the justifier of such in a declarative way, and God only, though not to the

exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and which sentence of justification is pronounced by him on the foot of a perfect righteousness, which neither law nor justice can find fault with, but entirely approve of; and so he appears just and righteous, even though he justifies the sinner and the ungodly.

Romans 3:27

Where is boasting then?

&c.] There is no room nor reason for it, either in Jews or Gentiles: not in the Jews, who were very apt to boast of their being Abraham’s seed; of their circumcision; of their being Israelites; of their having and keeping the law; of God being their God; and of their knowledge of him: nor in the Gentiles, who were ready to boast of their philosophy, wisdom, and learning; of their self-sufficiency, freewill, and of the things they had in their own power.

It is excluded;

it is shut out of doors; the key is turned upon it; it is not allowed of; it is entirely exploded:

by what law? of works? nay;

for, that establishes boasting when men seek life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, and fancy they shall be able to attain them this way:

but by the law of faith:

not by a law requiring faith; nor as if the Gospel was a law, a new law, a remedial law, a law of milder terms; but the word “law” here answers to the Hebrew word (hrwt) , which signifies any “doctrine” or “instruction”, and oftentimes the doctrine of the Gospel, as in (Isaiah 2:3) (42:4) , and here particularly, the doctrine of a sinner’s justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; according to which doctrine the most unlikely persons are justified, even ungodly persons, the worst and vilest of sinners; and that without any consideration of works, by faith only, which is freely given them; and by faith in Christ’s righteousness only: so that there is not the least room for boasting in the creature, but all their boasting is in Christ, who is made unto them righteousness, and by whom they are justified.

Romans 3:28

Therefore we conclude

This is the conclusion from the premises, the sum total of the whole account:

that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

The subject of justification is, “man”, not in opposition to angels; nor does it design the Jew against the Gentile, though some have so thought; but the apostle names neither Jew nor Gentile, but “man”, to show that Christ’s righteousness is unto all, and every man, that believes, be he who he will; and is to be understood indefinitely, that every man that is justified is justified by faith. The means is “by faith”, not habitually or actually considered; that is, either as an habit and principle infused into us, or as an act performed by us; but either organically, as it is a means of receiving Christ’s righteousness; or objectively, as it denotes Christ the object of it: and all this is done “without works”, of any sort; not by a faith which is without works, for such a faith is dead, and of no avail; but by faith without works joined to it, in the affair of justification; or by the righteousness of Christ imputed by God the Father, without any consideration of them, and received by faith, and relied upon by the believer, without any regard unto them.

Romans 3:29

Is he the God of the Jews only?

&c.] The Jews made their boast of him as such, and would not allow the Gentiles any interest in him: but

is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also:

God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; not only as the Creator, preserver, and Governor of them, or as he has a right to demand worship and service of them, but as he is their covenant God; not by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, or by the Sinai Covenant, but by the covenant of grace; as appears by his loving them in Christ, choosing them in him, putting them into his hands, providing blessings of grace for them in him, and sending his Son to redeem them; by calling them by his grace; by their sanctification, adoption, pardon, and justification; by taking out of them a people for his name with whom he dwells, and of whom he takes care; and will never leave nor forsake: all which may lead us to observe the distinguishing grace of God, the happiness of our state and condition, and what encouragement we have for faith and hope in God.

Romans 3:30

Seeing it is one God

God is one in nature and essence, though there are

three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whence it appears, that he that is the God of the Jews, is also the God of the Gentiles, or there would be more gods than one; and that these are justified in one and the same manner, or God must be divided; for God, as he is one in nature, so he is one in will, in his promises, and in the methods of his grace:

which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

The objects of justification are “the circumcision”, the circumcised Jews, and “the uncircumcision”, the uncircumcised Gentiles; the circumcision of the one does not forward, and the uncircumcision of the other does not hinder, nor neither of them effect the grace of justification: the justifier of them is one and the same, who is God; and the matter of their justification is the same, which is the righteousness of Christ; and the manner of it, or the means of their comfortable apprehension of it, is the same; for those phrases, “by faith”, and “through faith”, mean one and the same thing; see (Philippians 3:9).

Romans 3:31

Do we then make void the law through faith?

&c.] Which question is answered by way of detestation,

God forbid!

and by asserting the contrary,

yea, we establish the law.

The law is not made void, neither by the grace nor doctrine of faith: not by the grace of faith; for that faith is not right which is not attended with works of righteousness; and those works are not right which do not flow from faith. Such a connection there is between faith and works; and so much do the one depend upon the other.

Moreover, none but believers are capable of performing good works aright, and they do them, and they ought to do them: besides, faith, as a grace, looks to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and therefore do not make it void.

Nor is it made void by the doctrine of faith, and by the particular doctrine of a sinner’s justification by faith in Christ’s righteousness, which is here more especially intended; for though it is made void by it, as to any use of it for justification by the deeds thereof; yet its use in other respects is not set aside, such as to inform us of the

mind and will of God, to discover and convince of sin, to show believers their deformity and imperfection, to render Christ and his righteousness more valuable, and to be a rule of walk and conversation to them; and it still remains a cursing and condemning law to Christless sinners, though justified ones are delivered from it as such: yea, the law is so far from being made void, that it is established by this doctrine; for by it the perpetuity of it is asserted, the spirituality of it is acknowledged, the perfect righteousness of it is secured: according to this doctrine all its demands are answered; whatever it requires it has, such as holiness of nature, perfect obedience to its precepts, and its full penalty borne: it is placed in the best hands, where it will ever remain; and a regard to it is enforced under the best influence, by the best of motives, and from the best of principles.

It is indeed abolished as a covenant of works, and in this sense is made void to believers; and it is done away as to the form of administration of it by Moses; and it is destroyed as a yoke of bondage; and the people of God are free from the malediction of it, and condemnation by it, and so from its terror; yet it remains unalterable and unchangeable in the hands of Christ; the matter of it is always the same, and ever obligatory on believers, who, though they are freed from the curse of it, are not exempted from obedience to it: wherefore the law is not made void, so as to be destroyed and abolished in every sense, or to be rendered idle, inactive, useless, and insignificant; but, on the contrary, is made to stand, is placed on a sure basis and firm foundation, as the words used signify.

INTRODUCTION ROMANS 4

The apostle having, in the preceding chapters, proved that there is no justification before God by the works of the law, partly from the depraved state and condition that all men are in by nature, both Jews and Gentiles; and partly from the nature of the law itself, which discovers sin, arraigns men for it, and convicts of it, and pronounces guilty before God for it; as also by showing, that it is by another righteousness, which he describes, that men are justified in the sight of God; proceeds in this to confirm the same by an example; and that which he pitches upon is the most appropriate and pertinent he could have thought of, namely, that of Abraham, the father of the Jews, Ro 4:1 , for in whatsoever way he was justified, his sons surely could not imagine but it must be the right way, nor should they seek another: now that Abraham was not

justified by works, he proves Ro 4:2 , from an absurdity following upon it, that he would have just reason to glory; whereas no man ought to glory before God, but only in the Lord: and by a passage of Scripture, Ro 4:3 , to which he appeals, he makes it clearly appear that he was justified by faith, for that says, his faith was counted for righteousness. This case of accounting anything to another for righteousness, is illustrated by two sorts of persons, who have different things accounted to them, and in a different manner; to the worker, the reward is reckoned of debt, and not of grace, Ro 4:4 , but to the believer that works not, his faith, as Abraham’s was, is counted for righteousness; whence it follows, that not the worker is justified by his works, but the believer by the righteousness of faith; and this is confirmed by a testimony of David in Ps 32:1,2 , by which the apostle proves the imputation of righteousness without works, in which the happiness of men consists, Ro 4:6-8 , and shows, that this happiness does not belong to circumcised persons only, but to the uncircumcised also; and therefore is not by circumcision, but by faith, Ro 4:9 , and which he proves by observing the time when faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness; not when he was circumcised, but before, Ro 4:10 , the use of which circumcision to him was to assure him, that he should be the father of uncircumcised Gentiles that believed, to whom righteousness should be imputed, as to him when he was uncircumcised, Ro 4:11 , who are described by their imitation of his faith, which he had, and exercised before his circumcision, Ro 4:12 . And this leads on to a fresh argument, proving justification to be by faith, and not by the works of the law, since the promise made to Abraham, and his seed, was not through the law, but the righteousness of faith; and consequently both his and their justification were not by the one, but by the other, Ro 4:13 , or, if otherwise, both the faithfulness of God, and the faith of his people, would be void, and the promise of grace of no effect, Ro 4:14 . And this is still further argued from the effect of the law working wrath, which, if justification was by it, it would never do, Ro 4:15 . The wisdom and goodness of God in giving faith, and not works, a concern in justification, are observed, Ro 4:16 , whereby it appears to be of free grace, faith only being a recipient, and what gives all the glory to God; and also the promise of eternal life through justification by free grace becomes sure to all the spiritual seed; who are distributed into two sorts, the believing Jews under the legal dispensation, and the believing Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation; of both which Abraham

was father; which is confirmed by a testimony out of Ge 17:4,5 , whose faith is described by the object of it, the omnipotent God that quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were, Ro 4:17 , and by the nature of it, Ro 4:18 , believing in hope against hope, resting on the promise of God; and by the strength of it, being not at all weakened by considering, either his own case, or that of his wife’s, Ro 4:19 , and was so far from being staggered through unbelief at these things, that it was strong in exercise, thereby glorifying God, the object of it, Ro 4:20 , nay, it rose up to a plerophory, a full assurance, Ro 4:21 , being built upon the power of a promising God; hence, as before observed, his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, Ro 4:22 , And now in the same way that he was justified, all his children, his spiritual seed, are justified, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; for what is said concerning the imputation of the righteousness of faith to him, does not concern him only, Ro 4:23 , but all true believers also; whose faith is described by the object of it, him that raised up Christ from the dead, that is, God the Father, Ro 4:24 , who is supposed hereby to have been dead, and is represented as the Lord and Saviour of his people; and of whom a further account is given, Ro 4:25 , as being delivered into the hands of men, of justice, and of death, for the sins of his people, which he took upon him, and bore, and made satisfaction for, and as being raised again for their justification; so that this is a benefit owing not to the works of men, but to what Christ has done and suffered in the room and stead of his people; which is what the apostle meant to bring this point unto; the blessed effects and consequences of which he relates in the next chapter.

ROMANS CHAPTER 4

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 4

Romans 4:1

What shall we say then

The apostle having proved that there is no justification by the works of the law; to make this appear more clear and evident to the Jews, he instances in the greatest person of their nation, and for whom they had the greatest value and esteem,

Abraham, our father;

who was not a righteous and good man, but the head of the Jewish nation; and, as the Syriac version here styles him, (athbad avyr) , “the head”, or “chief of the fathers”; and so the Alexandrian copy, “our forefather”: and was the first of the circumcision, and is described here by his relation to the Jews, “our father”; that is,

as pertaining to the flesh;

or according to carnal descent, or natural generation and relation; for in a spiritual sense, or with respect to faith and grace, he was the father of others, even of all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles: now the question put concerning him is, “what he, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?” for the phrase, “as pertaining to the flesh”, may be connected with the word

found;

and to find anything is by seeking to obtain, and enjoy it: and the sense of the whole is, did he find out the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by the mere hint of carnal reason? and did he obtain these things by his own strength? or were these acquired by his circumcision in the flesh, or by any other fleshly privilege he enjoyed? or was he justified before God by any services and performances of his, of whatsoever kind? There is indeed no express answer returned; but it is evident from what follows, that the meaning of the apostle is, that it should be understood in the negative.

Romans 4:2

For if Abraham were justified by works

That Abraham was not, and could not be justified by works, is clear from hence, that if this was his case,

he hath whereof to glory;

which will be allowed him before men, on account of his pious life and conversation:

Romans 4:3

For what saith the Scripture?

&c.] This answers to (מאי דכתיב) , “what is that which is written” F3? or what does the Scripture say? which is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when anything is proposed, which seems contrary to Scripture, as here justification by works does. A testimony from Scripture is here produced, proving that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works: the place referred to is (Genesis 15:6) ;

Abraham believed God;

the object of his faith and trust were not his riches, nor his righteousness, but Jehovah, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, styled in (Genesis 15:1) , “the Word of the Lord”, the essential Word of God, and called his “shield”, and “exceeding great reward”; characters which are very applicable to Christ: and this faith of his in the Lord was not a mere assent to the promise of God, but a fiducial act of faith in him; and was not merely concerned with temporal, but with spiritual things, and particularly about Christ the promised seed:

and it was counted to him for righteousness,

the meaning of which is not, that Abraham imputed righteousness to God, or celebrated his righteousness and faithfulness, as some; or that the world reckoned Abraham a righteous person, as others; but that God reckoned him righteous, or imputed it to him for righteousness: and the question is, what the it is which was counted to him for righteousness? and that this is to be understood, (hnmah le) , “concerning faith”, as R. Solomon Jarchi says, is out of question; for this is expressly said by the apostle, (Romans 4:9) . The only one is, whether it means the grace of faith by which he believed; or the object of faith on which he believed, and with which his faith was conversant: not the former, for that is not righteousness, nor accounted so; but is distinguished from it, and is that by which a person receives and lays hold on righteousness; besides, whatever may be alleged in favour of the imputation of Abraham's faith to himself for righteousness, it can never be thought to be imputed to others on that account; whereas the very selfsame it is imputed to others also;

see (Romans 4:24) ; it remains then that it was the promised seed, the Messiah, and his righteousness, which Abraham, by faith, looked unto, and believed in, that was made unto him righteousness by imputation. Now since so great and good a man as Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith in the righteousness of the Messiah, it follows, that none of his sons, nor any other person whatever, ought to seek for, or expect to be justified in any other way.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. & 15. 2. & passim.

but not before God;

who saw all the iniquity of his heart, and was privy to all his failings and infirmities: besides, glorying before God in a man's own works, is contrary to the scheme and method of God's grace; is excluded by the doctrine of faith; nor is there any place for glorying before God but in Christ, and his righteousness: if therefore Abraham had not that of which he could glory before God, he could not be justified by works in his sight: but does not the Apostle James say that he was justified by works, (James 2:21) ? To this it may be replied, that the two apostles, Paul and James, are not speaking of the same thing: Paul speaks of justification before God, James of justification before men; Paul speaks of the justification of the person, James of the justification of a man's cause, as the truth of his faith, or the uprightness of his conduct; Paul speaks of works, as the causes of justification, James of them as the effects and evidences of faith; Paul had to do with the self-righteous, who trusted in their own works for justification, James with Gnostics, who slighted and neglected the performance of them. These things considered, they will be found to agree.

Romans 4:4

Now to him that worketh

The apostle illustrates the former case by two sorts of persons in this and the next verse, who have different things accounted to them, and in a different manner. The one is represented as working, the other not. By the worker is meant, not one that works from, and upon principles of grace. The regenerate man is disposed to work for God; the man that has the Spirit of God is capable of working; he that has the grace of Christ, and strength from him, can work well; he that believes in Christ, works in a right way; he that loves Christ,

works freely, and from a right principle; and he that has Christ's glory in view, works to a right end: but the worker here, is one that works upon nature's principles, and with selfish views; one that works in the strength of nature, trusting to, and glorying in what he does; seeking righteousness by his work, and working for eternal life and salvation. Now let it be supposed, that such a worker not only thinks he does, but if it could be, really does all the works of the law, yields a perfect obedience to it; what

is the reward

that is, and will be

reckoned

to him? There is no reward due to the creature's work, though ever so perfect, arising from any desert or dignity in itself: there may be a reward by promise and compact; God may promise a reward to encourage to obedience, as he does in the law, which is not eternal life; for that is the free gift of God, and is only brought to light in the Gospel; and though heaven is called a reward, yet not of man's obedience, but Christ's; but admitting heaven itself to be the reward promised to the worker, in what manner must that be reckoned to him?

not of grace:

for grace and works can never agree together; for if the reward is reckoned for the man's works, then it is not of grace, "otherwise work is no more work", (Romans 11:6) ; and if it is of grace, then not for his works, "otherwise grace is no more grace", (Romans 11:6) ; it remains therefore, that if it is reckoned for his works, it must be

of debt:

it must be his due, as wages are to an hireling. Now this was not Abraham's case, which must have been, had he been justified by works; he had a reward reckoned to him, and accounted his, which was God himself, "I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward", (Genesis 15:1) ; which must be reckoned to him, not of debt, but of grace; wherefore it follows, that he was justified, not by works, but by the grace of God imputed to him; that which his faith believed in for righteousness. The distinction of a reward of grace, and of debt, was known to the Jews; a the one they called (orp) , the other (rkv) : the former F4 they say is (lwmgh) , "a benefit", which is freely of grace bestowed on an undeserving person, or one he is not obliged to; the other is what is given, (Nydb) , "of debt", in strict justice.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Maimon. Bartenora & Yom Tob in Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 3.

Romans 4:5

But to him that worketh not

Not that the believer does not work at all, but not from such principles, and with such views as the other; he does not work in order to obtain life and salvation; he does not seek for justification by his doings:

but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly:

or that ungodly one: particular reference is had to Abraham, who in his state of unregeneracy was an ungodly person; as all God's elect are in a state of nature, and are such when God justifies them, being without a righteousness of their own; wherefore he imputes the righteousness of another, even that of his own Son, unto them: and though he justifies the ungodly, he does not justify their ungodliness, but them from it; nor will he, nor does he leave them to live and die in it; now to him that worketh not, that is perfect righteousness; or has no opportunity of working at all; or what he does, he does not do, that he might be justified by it; but exercises faith on God as justifying persons, who, like himself, are sinners, ungodly and destitute of a righteousness:

his faith is counted for righteousness;

not the act, but the object of it; which was Abraham's case, and therefore was not justified by works. The Vulgate Latin version here adds, "according to the purpose of the grace of God".

Romans 4:6

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man,

&c.] the apostle having instanced in Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, cites some passages from David, king of Israel, a person of great note and esteem among the Jews, in favour of the doctrine he is establishing; who in a very proper and lively manner describes the happiness of such persons:

unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

This righteousness cannot be the righteousness of the law, or man's obedience to it; for that is a righteousness with works, is a man's own, and not imputed; and indeed is not a righteousness in the sight of God: nor does man's blessedness lie in, or come by it; no man

is, or can be instilled by it, nor saved by it, or attain to heaven and eternal happiness by the means of it; but the righteousness here spoken of is the righteousness of Christ, called the righteousness of God; and is better than that of angels or men; is complete and perfect; by which the law is honoured, and justice is satisfied. This is freely bestowed, and graciously "imputed" by God. Just in the same way his righteousness becomes ours, as Adam's sin did, which is by imputation; or in the same way that our sins became Christ's, his righteousness becomes ours; and as we have no righteousness of our own when God justifies us, this must be done by the righteousness of another; and that can be done no other way by the righteousness of another, than by imputing it to us: and which is done "without works"; not without the works of Christ, of which this righteousness consists; but without the works of the creature, or any consideration of them, which are utterly excluded from justification; for if these came into account, it would not be of grace, and boasting would not be removed. Now such who have this righteousness thus imputed to them, are happy persons; they are justified from all sin, and freed from all condemnation; their persons and services are acceptable to God; it will be always well with them; they are heirs of glory, and shall enjoy it.

Romans 4:7

Saying, blessed are they

These words are cited from (Psalms 32:1) , and contain the proof of the happiness of justified persons. In this citation the singular number is changed into the plural, to take in all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, and very agreeably to the sense of the original; for the word (yrva) may be rendered "blessed are they", or, "O the blessednesses"; that is, of everyone of them,

whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered:

such whom God justifies by imputing the righteousness of his Son to them, he removes their iniquities from them, which is meant by their being "forgiven", and that "as far as the east is from the west", (Psalms 103:12) ; he casts them behind his back, (Isaiah 38:17) , and into the depths of the sea, (Micah 7:19) , so that they shall never be found more: such whom he clothes with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, (Isaiah 61:10) , "their sins are covered"; from the eye of divine justice, and shall never be seen more, or be brought against them to their condemnation, and

therefore must be happy persons. The F5 Jews tell us, that

``on the day of atonement Satan comes to accuse Israel, and he particularizes their sins, and the holy blessed God he particularizes their good works, and takes a pair of balances, and puts their sins against their good works, and weighs the one against the other; and when the two scales of the balances are alike, Satan goes to bring in other sins to overweigh; what does the holy blessed God do? he takes the sins out of the scale, and hides them (שלו) (תחת פורפירי) , "under his purple garment"; and when Satan comes and finds no iniquity there, as it is said "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none", (Jeremiah 50:20) ; and when Satan sees this, he says before him, Lord of the world, "thou hast taken away the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin", (Psalms 85:2) . Selah."

The purple garment they explain by שלו רחמינו (מלבוש) , "his garment of mercy"; which is true of the mercy of God covering the sins of his people, through the purple blood of his Son; which is the purple covering of Christ, (Song of Solomon 3:10) , under which the saints go safe to glory, and by which blood their crimson and scarlet sins are blotted out, so as never to be seen more.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Caphtor, fol. 59. 1, 2.

Romans 4:8

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

] As he does not to those whom he justifies in Christ, and by his righteousness; for the sins of such he has imputed to his Son, as their surety; and he has bore them, took them away, having made full satisfaction for them; so that these persons will never be charged with them: they now appear before the throne without fault, and are blameless and irreproveable in the sight of God, and therefore must be eternally happy; for he will never think of their sins any more to their hurt; he will remember them no more; he "will never reckon them to them", but acquit them from them, justify and accept them; wherefore they must be secure from wrath and condemnation, enjoy much peace and comfort now,

and be happy hereafter.

Romans 4:9

[Cometh] **this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only]?**

&c.] That is, upon the circumcised Jews; are they the only persons that partake of this happiness? the word “only” is rightly supplied, and is in the Claromontane exemplar used by Beza, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions:

or upon the uncircumcision also?

upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; do not they likewise share in this blessedness?

for we say, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

The design of these words with the following, is to prove that the blessing of justification belongs to Gentiles as well as Jews, and that it is by faith, and not by circumcision; which is done by observing the state and condition Abraham was in when justified.

Romans 4:10

How was it then reckoned?

&c.] The Arabic version adds, “and when”; and the Ethiopic version reads it, “when was Abraham justified?” expressing the sense, not the words of the original text, with which agree the following questions:

when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

that is, was he justified, or his faith reckoned to him for righteousness, when he was a circumcised, or an uncircumcised person?

not in circumcision;

or when he was circumcised; for when it was said of him, that “he believed in the Lord”, and “he counted it to him for righteousness”, (Genesis 15:6) , he was then uncircumcised, and remained so many years after: for this was before the birth of Ishmael, and Ishmael was “thirteen” years of age when he and his father Abraham were circumcised; so that it must be “fourteen” years, or thereabout, before his circumcision, that this declaration of his being a justified person was made; wherefore the apostle rightly adds,

but in uncircumcision;

or whilst an uncircumcised person: hence it clearly

appears that circumcision could not be the cause of his justification, since it followed it; and if Abraham when uncircumcised was a justified person, as it is certain he was, why may not uncircumcised Gentiles be justified also? and especially when it is observed, that the covenant made with Abraham when uncircumcised, included the Gentiles; see (Genesis 12:3) (17:4-6) .

Romans 4:11

And he received the sign of circumcision

Or “the sign circumcision”, as the Syriac version reads it, and so the Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens’s; that is, Abraham received at the hands of God, the commandment of circumcision, which was a “sign” or token of the covenant; not of grace, but of that peculiar covenant God made with Abraham and his natural seed, concerning their enjoyment of the land of Canaan; and which was a distinctive sign or badge, which distinguished the posterity of Abraham from other people, and was also a typical one; not of baptism, for circumcision was peculiar to Abraham’s natural seed, whereas baptism is not, but was administered to Gentiles as well as Jews; circumcision was confined to males only, not so baptism; circumcision bears no likeness to, nor any resemblance with baptism, whereas there is always some likeness and agreement between the type and the antitype; besides, if this had been the case, circumcision would have ceased when baptism took place, whereas it is certain it did not, but continued in full force with the rest of the ceremonies until the death of Christ; and it is as certain, that “baptism” was administered and continued to be administered three or four years before that time; which fully demonstrates the falsehood of that assertion, that baptism succeeds or comes in the room of circumcision; whereas baptism was in full force before circumcision was out of date: but circumcision was a typical sign of Christ, as all the ceremonies of the law were, and of the shedding of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, original and actual, and also of the circumcision of the heart. And was, moreover,

a seal of the righteousness of faith;

or which “sign” was “a seal”; and so it signifies the same as before; (shmeia outw legousi tav) (שאר־נא־רשט) , “signs, so they call seals”, says Harpocratian F6, and “to be signed”, he says, is used, “instead of being sealed”: or it may be expressive of something else, as that circumcision was a seal, not for secrecy, but for certainty; it being a confirmation, not merely of the sincerity of Abraham’s

faith, but of his justifying righteousness, which was not his faith, but that which his faith looked to; and

which he had,

both faith and righteousness,

yet being uncircumcised:

whence it follows, that he was not justified by his circumcision, but by a righteousness which he had before he was circumcised, or otherwise his circumcision could not have been a seal of it: though this clause, “which he had, yet being uncircumcised”, may be rendered, “which should be in the uncircumcision”, that is, in the uncircumcised Gentiles; and the sense be, that circumcision was a seal to Abraham, and gave assurance to him that he should be the father of many nations in a spiritual sense; and that the righteousness of faith which he had, should also come upon, and be imputed to the uncircumcised Gentiles; and accordingly it may be observed, that this seal was continued in full force on his natural seed, until this promise began to take place, and then it was abolished: this seal was broken off when the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the word of righteousness and faith, or the Gospel preaching justification by the righteousness of Christ, was ordered to be published to the Gentile world. It may be inquired whether circumcision being called a seal, will prove that baptism is a seal of the covenant? I answer, that circumcision was only a seal to Abraham of a peculiar covenant made with him, and of a particular promise made to him, and was it to be admitted a seal of the covenant of grace, it will not prove baptism to be such; since, as has been observed, baptism does not succeed it in place, in time, and use; and could this be allowed that it succeeds it, and is a seal of the righteousness of faith, as that was, it can only be a seal to them that have both faith and righteousness, and not to them that have neither; it would only at most be a seal to believers. But, alas! not ordinances, but other things more valuable than they, are the seals of the covenant, and of believers; the blood of Christ is the seal, and the only seal of the covenant of grace, by which its promises and blessings are ratified and confirmed; and the Holy Spirit is the only earnest, pledge, seal, and sealer of the saints, until the day of redemption. The apostle uses the word “seal” concerning circumcision, it being a word his countrymen made use of when they spoke of it, thus paraphrasing on (Song of Solomon 3:8) ; they say F7,

“everyone of them was sealed, (hlym

tmytx) , “with the seal of circumcision” upon their flesh, as Abraham was sealed in his flesh:”

that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised;

that is, his circumcision was a seal unto him that he should be so, which explains and confirms the sense of the former clause; not a father of the uncircumcised Gentiles by natural generation, for so he was only the father of the Jews, but of them as they were believers; and not so called because he was the author of their faith, but because they have the same sort of faith he had:

that righteousness might be imputed to them also;

not Abraham’s faith and righteousness, nor their own, but the righteousness of Christ received by faith, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, without any difference of Jew or Gentile. Now when the apostle styles Abraham the father of “all” believers, even of uncircumcised ones, he says no other than what the Jews frequently own. Says one F8 of them, speaking of the Ishmaelites;

“they are the seed of Abraham, who was (ראשׁ המאמינים) , “the head of them that believe?””

and says F9 another,

“Hagar might bring the firstfruits, and read, as it is said to Abraham, “a father of, many nations have I made thee”, (Genesis 17:5) ; for he is (wlwk Mlweh lkl ba) , “the father of the whole world”, who enter under the wings of the Shekinah;”

and says the same writer elsewhere F11, having mentioned the above passage,

“they said in times past, thou wast the father of the Syrians, but now thou art “the father of the whole world”; wherefore every stranger may say this, “as thou hast sworn to our fathers”, (Micah 7:20) ; for Abraham was “the father of the whole world”; seeing, (hnmw dml) , “he has taught the true faith.””

The apostle reasons on what they themselves allow, to prove that the blessedness of justification comes not only upon the Jews, but upon the Gentiles also.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Lexicon in Decem Rhetores, p. 266. Ed. Manssac.

F7 Targum in Cant. 3. 8.

F8 In Caphtor, fol. 121. 1.

F9 Maimon. Hilchot Bicurim, c. 4. sect. 3.

F11 Comment in Misn. Bicurim, c. 1. sect. 4. Vid.

T. Hieros Bicurim, fol. 64. 1. & T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 13. 1. & Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 3.

Romans 4:12**And the father of circumcision**

So the Jews call Abraham (ראש הנימולים) F12, “the head of those that are circumcised”; and (ראש למולים) F13, “the head to them that are circumcised”; but the apostle here says, he is a father

to them who are not of the circumcision only;

not to the Jews only, in a spiritual sense, and not to all of them, since some were “of Israel”, who were not Israel, not Israelites indeed, or true believers;

but [to such] also [who] walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised;

that is, who have the same faith he had; imitate and follow him in the exercise of faith; walk by faith, as he did when he was uncircumcised, as they are; and so the Jews say F14,

“Abraham is the father of all, (אבריו באמונתו), (באינו), “that go after him in his faith””

FOOTNOTES:

F12 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3.

F13 Juchasin, fol. 5. 2. Midrash Esther, fol. 85. 3.

F14 R. Sol. Hammelech Michlol. Jophi in Mal. ii. 15.

Romans 4:13**For the promise that he should be heir of the world**

This promise is thought by some to refer to that of his being “the father of many nations”, (Genesis 17:4 Genesis 17:5) (Romans 4:17 Romans 4:18) ; by whom the Gentiles are particularly meant, who are sometimes called “the world”, and “the whole world”, or the elect of God, the believing part of the world; whether among Jews or Gentiles, who sometimes go by the name of “the

world” in Scripture: but to this it may be objected, that the promise here spoken of is made to Abraham’s seed, as well as to himself; by which is meant not the Messiah, who is indeed heir of the world, and all things in it, but all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles; as appears from (Romans 4:16) ; and therefore cannot be both heirs and inheritance too. Others think the land of Canaan is designed, and by a synecdoche, a part of the world is put for the whole world; but that land is never so called, and, besides, the promise of it belonged to those of the law, and to them only, contrary to what the apostle argues, (Romans 4:14 Romans 4:16) . Others therefore consider Canaan as a type of heaven, which Abraham and his spiritual seed are heirs of by promise. But rather, by “the world” here, is meant, both this world and that which is to come; Abraham and all believers are the “heirs” of this world, and of all things in it; “all things” are theirs, and, among the rest, the world, Christ being theirs, and they being Christ’s; he is heir of all things, and they are joint heirs with him; and how little soever they may enjoy of it now, the time is coming, when they, by virtue of their right, “shall inherit the earth”; see (Psalms 37:9 Psalms 37:11) ; and now they have as much of it as is necessary, and with a blessing, and which the Jews call their “world”. It is a saying in their Talmud F15, (Kyyxb hart Kmlwe) , “thou shalt see thy world” in thy lifetime; which the gloss explains, “thou shalt find”, or enjoy all thy necessities, or what is needful for thee; and of Abraham they say F16, that

“he was the foundation of the world, and that for his sake the world was created;”

and introduce God saying of him thus F17

“as I am the only one in my world, so he is the only one, (wmlweb) , “in his world””

And as he and all the saints are heirs of this world, so of the world to come, the future salvation, the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, never fading, and reserved in the heavens; for they are heirs of God himself, and shall inherit all things: now this large and comprehensive promise, which takes in the things of time and eternity,

[was] not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law:

not through the law of circumcision, or on the score of their obedience to that, for this promise was made before that was enjoined; see (Genesis 12:2 Genesis

12:3) ; nor through the law of Moses, which was not as yet given; nor through the law of nature, nor by any righteousness of the law;

but through the righteousness of faith:

by virtue of which they have “all things that pertain to life and godliness”, (2 Peter 1:3) ; and have “the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”, (1 Timothy 4:8) ; enjoy with a blessing what they now have, and have a right and title to the heavenly glory.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1.

F16 Caphtor, fol. 99. 2.

F17 T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.

Romans 4:14**For if they which are of the law be heirs**

That is, if the Jews who are under the law, and are seeking for righteousness and life by the works of it, should, on the account of their obedience to it, be heirs of the grace of life and of glory,

faith is made void;

for if the right to the inheritance is by the works of the law, there is no room for faith; that can be of no use or service;

and the promise made of none effect:

if salvation is by works, it is to no purpose for God to promise, or men to believe; for the thing promised depends not upon God’s promise, but upon man’s obedience to the law; and if that is not perfectly observed, as it cannot possibly be, then the promise of God stands for nothing, and is in course made void. The apostle here argues from the absurdities which follow upon the doctrine of justification by works, as he does from the different effects of the law, in the following verse.

Romans 4:15**Because the law worketh wrath**

Not the wrath of man, though that is sometimes stirred up through the prohibitions of the law, to which the carnal mind of man is enmity, but the wrath of God the law is so far from justifying sinners, that it curses and condemns them; and when it comes into the heart and is let into the conscience of a sinner, it fills with terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God, and a fearful

looking for of his judgment and fiery indignation:

for where no law is, there is no transgression;

(שאינו) לא מנה ולא בירה) F18; a sort of a proverbial expression: had the law of Moses not been given, there was the law of nature which sin is a transgression of; but the law of Moses was added for the better discovery and detection of sin, which would not have been so manifest without it, and which may be the apostle’s sense; that where there is no law, there is no knowledge of any transgression; and so the Ethiopic version reads the words, “if the law had not come, there would have been none who would have known sin”; but the law is come, and there is a law by which is the knowledge of sin, and therefore no man can be justified by it; since that convinces him of sin, and fills him with a sense of divine wrath on account of it.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Caphtor, fol. 10. 1.

Romans 4:16**Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace**

Meaning either the promise of being heir of the world, or the inheritance itself, or adoption which gives heirship, or remission of Sin, or the blessing of justification, either and all of these are of faith; not as the cause or condition of them, but as the means of God’s fixing and appointing to be the recipient of all and each of them: which is done, “that it might be by grace”; appear to be of the free grace and favour of God, as each of these blessings are: forasmuch as every blessing is received by faith, it is manifest it must be by grace; since faith itself is a gift of God’s grace, and lies purely in receiving favours at the hand of God, to whom it gives all the glory of them: and this is done with a further view,

to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.

The promise of the above blessings, particularly of the inheritance which is made in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, and which could not be disannulled by the law that came after it; this being by faith and of grace, and not of works, nor at all depending upon them, becomes sure to all believers, to all Abraham’s spiritual seed:

not to that only which is of the law;

to the Jews, who are said to be of the law, in

distinction to the Gentiles who were without it; and designs such of them as were believers in Christ, and to whom the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation; to these the promise was, and was sure, and not to them only:

but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham;
to the Gentiles, who though they are not by natural descent from Abraham, yet are of the same faith with him, and so are his seed in a spiritual sense:

who is the father of us all;
whether Jews or Gentiles, who are Christ's, and so Abraham's spiritual seed, and heirs of eternal life, according to the free promise of grace.

Romans 4:17

As it is written I have made thee a father of many nations,
&c.] The passage referred to, is in (Genesis 17:4 Genesis 17:5) ; which proves him to be a father not of the Jews only, since they cannot be called "many nations", but of the Gentiles also; and which must be understood in a spiritual sense, for Abraham was the father of them,

before him whom he believed, [even] God;
that is, he was so, either in the sight of God, who sees not as man sees; in his account, he was the father of many nations, long before he really in fact was; or "over against" or "like unto him", as the word may signify: as God was the Father of many nations, so was Abraham, though not in such a sense as he is; and as God is the Father of us all that believe, so was Abraham; there is some little likeness and resemblance in this between them, though not sameness. The object of his faith is described as he,

who quickeneth the dead:
meaning either the dead body of Abraham and Sarah's womb; or Isaac, who was given up for dead; or the Gentiles, who were dead in trespasses and sins; or rather the dead bodies of men at the last day, a work which none but the almighty God can effect; the consideration of which is sufficient to engage faith in the promises of God, and a dependence on him for the fulfilment of them: and who stands further described as he, who

calleth those things which be not, as though they were;

so he called Abraham the father of many nations, when he was not in fact, as if he really was; and the Gentiles his seed and offspring, before they were; and when he comes effectually to call them by his grace, they are represented as "things which are not", whom he called, "to bring to nought things that are", (1 Corinthians 1:28) ; they were not his people, nor his children, and he called them so, and by his grace made them so, and made them appear to be so; for as in creation so in regeneration, God calls and brings that into being which before was not: and the phrase seems to be an allusion to the creation of all things out of nothing; and it is a Rabbinical one, for so the Jews speaking of the creation say F19

קורא אל איני) , "he calls to that which is not", and it is excluded; (i.e. all things are excluded out of it, as a chicken out of an egg;) and to that which is, and it is established, and to the world, and it is stretched out."

FOOTNOTES:
F19 R. Solomon ben Gabirol in Cether Malcuth apud L. Capell. in loc.

Romans 4:18

Who against hope believed in hope
Abraham believed the promise of God,

that he might become the father of many nations,
being assisted by a supernatural aid: "in hope"; of the fulfilment of it by the grace and power of God: "against hope": against all visible, rational grounds of hope; Sarah's womb and his own body being dead, but inasmuch as God had said it, he believed:

according to that which is spoken, so shall thy seed be;

his faith rested upon the word of God, which showed the nature of it, and that it was of the right kind.

Romans 4:19

And being not weak in faith
Abraham was not weak in the exercise of his faith, on the promise of God; nor was his faith weakened about the accomplishment of it, neither by the length of time after the promise was made, nor by the seeming insuperable difficulties of nature which attended it; for

he considered not his own body now dead.

The Alexandrian copy reads without the negative, "he considered his own body now dead", and so the Syriac version: which makes his faith the greater, that though he did consider his case, yet his faith was not weakened: the phrase, "his body now dead", is an "euphemism" of the "merebrum virile", which by the Jews, when unfit for generation, is called (tm rba) , "merebrum emortuum" F20:

when he was about an hundred years old;
not being quite an hundred years of age, wanting a year or thereabout:

neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb;
how unfit she was to conceive and bear children: now though he might consider these things in his mind, yet they did not dwell upon his mind, nor he upon them; at least he did not consider them, so as to distrust the divine promise.

FOOTNOTES:
F20 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 55. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 55. 1. & Gloss in ib. Shebuot, fol. 18. 1.

Romans 4:20

He staggered not at the promise of God
There is no reason to stagger at, or hesitate about any of the promises of God, since they are made by him that cannot lie; his faithfulness is engaged to perform them; with him all things are possible; every promise is in Christ, yea and amen, and never did any fail; and yet so it is, that some of God's children,

through unbelief,
do stagger at the promises of God; thinking either that they are too great for them, or demur upon them through difficulties which attend them:
but

so did not Abraham, he
was strong in faith;
nothing moved him, no difficulties discouraged him, he made no demur upon the promise, nor had the least hesitation in his mind about the accomplishment of it; but was fully assured that so it would be, as God had said; and thus he was

giving glory to God;
ascribing to him the glory of his veracity, faithfulness, power, grace, and goodness, as all such who are strong

in faith do; such persons bring the most glory to God, and are the most comfortable in their own souls. This phrase, (atwnmyhmb apqttal) , "to be strong" or strengthened, or strengthen themselves "in faith", is to be met with in Jewish writings F21, and is particularly used of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; all the tribes of Israel are not said to be (Mtnwmab Myqzx) , "strong in their faith"; only the tribe of Levi, when Moses stood in the gate and said, "who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me", (Exodus 32:26) : whoever is (wtwmab qzx) , "strong in his faith" F23; and there were none in all Israel but the tribe of Levi, who were "strong in their faith".

FOOTNOTES:
F21 Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 4.
F23 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 4.

Romans 4:21

And being fully persuaded
He had not only faith, a strong faith, but full assurance of faith:

that what he [God] had promised;
though it was so long ago, and there were so many difficulties in the way;

he was able,
being the Lord God Almighty,

to perform;
so his faith rested upon the power of God, with whom nothing is impossible.

Romans 4:22

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Not because his faith was strong, and he had a full assurance of it, but because it was right, resting on the promise of God, and relying upon his power and faithfulness to perform it; for though the righteousness of faith is not imputed to any sort of believers, not to mere nominal ones, yet to all such as have true faith, though it may be but weak; for faith, as to nature, kind, and object, though not as to degree, is the same in all true believers, and the same righteousness is imputed to one as to another.

Romans 4:23

Now it was not written for his sake alone

This was not left on the sacred records, (Genesis 15:6),

that it was imputed to him;

purely on his account, merely for his sake, as an encomium of his faith, and an honourable testimony to it, and for the encouragement of it; though this was doing him a very great honour, and was one design of it.

Romans 4:24**But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed**

What was written in the books of the Old Testament, was not written merely on account of them who are the subjects thereof, but for the use, learning, instruction and profit of saints under the New Testament dispensation; and particularly this concerning the pulsation of Abraham's faith for righteousness, or of the imputation of the righteousness of faith unto him for justification; which was not Abraham's faith, but that "righteousness" which his faith looked to, and laid hold on: see (Romans 4:12); for Abraham's faith itself could never be reckoned for righteousness to another, nor indeed was it to himself; but such as believe as Abraham did, they have the same righteousness imputed to them as he had; and truly of the same kind is the faith of Abraham, who believed in "God that quickeneth the dead", (Romans 4:17); and that of ours:

if,
or "seeing"

we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

which descriptive of the faith of New Testament believers, and of the object of it; see (Romans 10:9 Romans 10:10); and which object of faith is further described in (Romans 4:25).

Romans 4:25**Who was delivered for our offences**

Christ was delivered into the hands of men, and into the hands of justice, and unto death; and he was delivered by men, by Judas, to the chief priests, and by them to Pilate, and by Pilate to the Jews and Roman soldiers to be put to death; and he was also delivered up by his Father into the hands of justice and death, according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge; but not without his own free consent, who voluntarily laid down his life, and gave himself a ransom for his people: he

was delivered to death, not for any offences of his own, for he committed none; nor for the offences of angels, for these were not spared; nor for the offences, of all men, since all will not be saved; but for the offences of all God's elect: he was delivered for these, as the causes of his death, and as the end for which he died; namely, to make reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for them; which shows the love of the Father in delivering him up, and the grace and condescension of the Son in being willing to be delivered up on such an account: the nature and end of Christ's death may be learnt from hence, that he died not merely as a martyr, or as an example; nor only for the good, but in the room and stead of his people: we may also learn from hence the nature of sin, the strictness of justice, the obligations we lie under to Christ, and how many favours and blessings we may expect from God through him: who also

was raised again for our justification;

he was raised again from the dead by his Father, to whom this is often ascribed; and by himself, by his own power, which proves him to be the mighty God; and this was done not only that he might live an immortal and glorious life in our nature, having finished the work he undertook and came about, but for "our justification". He died in the room and stead of his people, and by dying made satisfaction for their sins; he rose again as their head and representative, and was legally discharged, acquitted, and justified, and they in him. Christ's resurrection did not procure the justification of his people, that was done by his obedience and death; but was for the testification of it, that it might fully appear that sin was atoned for, and an everlasting righteousness was brought in; and for the application of it, or that Christ might live and see his righteousness imputed, and applied to all those for whom he had wrought it out.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 5

The Apostle having clearly stated, and fully proved the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of faith, proceeds to observe the comfortable fruits and effects of this great blessing, known and enjoyed by the believer; as also the source and spring of it, the love of God, which appears in the death of Christ, in the room and stead of his people, which is the foundation on which it stands; and likewise gives an illustration of this benefit, by comparing the two heads, Adam and Christ, together. The first fruit and effect of justification, as a benefit perceived and enjoyed by faith, is peace with

God through Christ, Ro 5:1. The next is access through the Mediator to the throne of grace, where justified ones stand with a holy boldness and confidence, and the third is a cheerful hope of eternal glory, Ro 5:2, yea, such not only have joy in the hope of what is to come, but glory even in present afflictions; which prevents an objection that might be made to the above mentioned fruits and effects of justification, taken from the tribulations which saints are exercised with: and what occasions glorying even in these, is the sanctified use, or happy produce of afflictions, these being the means of exercising and increasing patience; by means of which a larger experience of divine things is gained; and through that, hope is confirmed, and all influenced by a plenteous discovery of the love of God to the soul, by the Spirit, Ro 5:4,5, an instance of which love is given, Ro 5:6, in Christ's dying for men; which love is enhanced by the character and condition of the persons for whom Christ died, being ungodly, and without strength; and by the time of it, being due time: then follows a further illustration of this love, by comparing it with what instances of love are to be found among men, Ro 5:7, by which it appears to be unparalleled; since scarcely for a righteous man, peradventure for a good man, one would die, yet no man dies for the ungodly, as Christ did: hence as his, so his Father's love is highly commended, by giving him up to death for persons while in such a state and condition, and under such a character, Ro 5:8, and justification now springing from this love, and being founded on the death of Christ, hence follow a security from wrath to come, Ro 5:9, a certainty of salvation, Ro 5:10, which is strongly argued from the different characters those Christ died for bear, before and after reconciliation, and from the death to the life of Christ, Ro 5:10, and also a rejoicing and glorying: in God through Christ, full expiation being made by his blood for sin, and this received by faith, Ro 5:11, and then the apostle proceeds to compare the two heads, Adam and Christ, together; the design of which is to show the largeness and freeness of the love and grace of God; how righteousness for justification comes by Christ; and how the persons, before described as sinners and ungodly, came to be in such a condition; and that is through the sin of the first man, in whom they all were, and in whom they all sinned and died, Ro 5:12, wherefore there must be a law before the law of Moses, or there could have been no sin, Ro 5:13, but that sin was in being, and was reckoned and imputed to the posterity of Adam, is clear from this single instance, death's power even over infants, from

the times of Adam to Moses, Ro 5:14 who therefore must be a public head, representing all his posterity; so that they were involved in the guilt of his sin, which brought death upon them; and in this he was a type of Christ, as is asserted in the same verse; that so as Adam was but one, and by one sin of his conveyed death to all his seed; so Christ, the Mediator, is but one, and by his one obedience conveys righteousness and, life to all his seed: and yet in some things there is a dissimilitude; sin and death, through the first man, are conveyed in a natural way to his offspring, but righteousness and life from Christ in a way of grace, Ro 5:15, It was one offence of Adam's, which brought condemnation and death upon all his posterity; but the righteousness of Christ is not only a justification of his seed from that one offence, but from all others, Ro 5:16, the one is unto death, the other unto life; and greater is the efficacy in the one to quicken, than in the other to kill, Ro 5:17, where a repetition is made of what is said in Ro 5:15, with an explanation, and the similitude between the two heads is clearly expressed, Ro 5:18, where condemnation on account of the sin of Adam, and justification through the righteousness of Christ, are opposed to each other; and both as extending to the whole of their several respective offspring, condemnation through Adam's offence to all his natural seed, and justification of life through Christ's righteousness to all his spiritual seed; which is still more fitly and clearly expressed in Ro 5:19, where the way and manner in which the one become sinners, and the other righteous, is plainly directed to; that it is, by the imputation of Adam's disobedience to the one, and by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the other: in Ro 5:20, an objection is obviated, which might be formed thus; if justification is by the grace of God, and through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, then the law is of no use; what purpose does that serve? what occasion was there for its entrance? The apostle replies, that though justification is not by it, yet a good end is answered by its entrance; for hereby sin is more known to be what it is, both original and actual; and the grace of God appears more abundant in justification from it, and in the pardon of it; and this grace is further illustrated in Ro 5:21, by comparing sin and grace together, and the different effects of their empire over the sons of men; the one reigning unto death, the other reigning through righteousness to eternal life by Christ.

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. 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.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men

unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 5

Romans 5:1

Therefore being justified by faith

Not that faith is at the first of our justification; for that is a sentence which passed in the mind of God from all eternity, and which passed on Christ, and on all the elect considered in him, when he rose from the dead; see (Romans 4:25) ; nor is it the chief, or has it the chief place in justification; it is not the efficient cause of it, it is God that justifies, and not faith; it is not the moving cause of it, that is the free grace of God; it is not the matter of it, that is the righteousness of Christ: we are not justified by faith, either as God's work in us, for, as such, it is a part of sanctification; nor as our work or act, as exercised by us, for then we should be justified by works, by something of our own, and have whereof to glory; but we are justified by faith objectively and relatively, as that relates to the object Christ, and his righteousness; or as it is a means of our knowledge, and perception of our justification by Christ's righteousness, and of our enjoying the comfort of it; and so we come to

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle having set the doctrine of justification in a clear light, and fully proved that it is not by the works of men, but by the righteousness of God; and having mentioned the several causes of it, proceeds to consider its effects, among which, peace with God stands in the first place; and is so called, to distinguish it from peace with men, which persons, though justified by faith in Christ's righteousness, may not have; but are sure, having a sense of this, to find peace with God, even with him against whom they have sinned, whose law they have transgressed, and whose justice they have affronted; reconciliation for sin being made, and a justifying righteousness brought in, and this imputed

and applied to them, they have that "peace of God"; that tranquillity and serenity of mind, the same with "peace with God" here, "which passes all understanding", (Philippians 4:7) ; and is better experienced than expressed: and this is all through our Lord Jesus Christ; it springs from his atoning sacrifice, and precious blood, by which he has made peace; and is communicated through the imputation of his righteousness, and the application of his blood; and is only felt and enjoyed in a way of believing, by looking to him as the Lord our righteousness.

Romans 5:2

By whom also we have access by faith

The access here spoken of is not to the blessing of justification; for though that is a grace which we have access to by Christ, and come at the knowledge of by faith, and enjoy the comfort of through it; and is a grace in which persons stand, and from which they shall never fall, and lays a solid foundation for rejoicing in hope of eternal glory; yet this sense would make the apostle guilty of a great tautology; and besides, he is not speaking of that blessing itself, but of its effects; and here of one distinct from "peace with God", before mentioned, as the word also manifestly shows: nor does it design any other blessing of grace, as pardon, adoption, sanctification and an access thereunto; not unto the free grace, favour, and good will of God, the source of all blessings; but to the throne of grace, which may be called

that grace,

because of its name, for God, as the God of all grace, sits upon it; it is an high favour to be admitted to it; it is grace persons come thither for, and which they may expect to find there: and

in,
or "at"

which we stand;

which denotes boldness, courage, and intrepidity, and a freedom from a servile fear and bashful spirit, and a continued constant attendance at it; all which is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission to the will of God. Now access to the throne of grace, and standing at that, are "by" Christ. There is no access to God in our own name and righteousness, and upon the foot of our own works. Christ is the only way of access to God, and acceptance with him; he is the Mediator

between God and us; he introduces into his Father's presence, gives audience at his throne, and renders both persons and services acceptable unto him: and this access is also "by faith"; and that both in God the Father, as our covenant God and Father; in faith of interest in his love and favour; believing his power and faithfulness, his fulness and sufficiency, and that he is a God hearing and answering prayer: and also in the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; and in his fulness for every supply: and such as have access to the throne of grace by faith in Christ, being comfortably persuaded of their justification before God, through his righteousness imputed to them, can and do

rejoice in hope of the glory of God;

which is another effect of justification by faith: by the "glory of God"; which is another effect of justification by faith: by the "glory of God", is not meant the essential glory of God; nor that which we ought to seek in all that we are concerned, and which we are to ascribe unto him on the account of his perfections and works; but that everlasting glory and happiness which he has prepared for his people, has promised to them, and has called them to by Christ, and will bestow upon them; of which he has given them a good hope through grace; and in the hope and believing views of which they can, and do rejoice, even amidst a variety of afflictions and tribulations in this world. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "in hope of the glory of the children of God"; eternal glory being proper to them.

Romans 5:3

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also

The tribulations of the saints are many and various, through the hatred of the world, the temptations of Satan, their own corruptions; and are the will of their heavenly Father; what Christ has foretold, and they expect; and here particularly design such as are for Christ's sake, which being supported under, and carried through, they glory in: not that these are desirable in themselves, and to the flesh; but they glory in them as they are for Christ's sake, and in a good cause; as they are trials of grace, and of use for the exercise of it: and as they are in the exercise of grace, amidst these tribulations, and are comforted under them, and are helped to have regard to the heavenly glory. The ground of which glorying is, that these afflictions are the means of promoting patience, experience, and hope:

knowing this, that tribulation worketh patience; patience is a grace, of which God is the author; it is one of the fruits of the Spirit; the word of God is the means of its being first implanted; and afflictions are the means of promoting it, when they are sanctified; otherwise they produce impatience, murmurings, and repinings; there is great need of patience under them; and, by divine grace, they are the matter and occasion of exercising, and so of increasing it.

Romans 5:4

And patience experience

As tribulations tend to exercise and increase patience, so patience being exercised and increased, enlarges the saints' stock and fund of experience; of the love and grace of God communicated to them at such seasons; of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises; of his power in supporting them; and of their own frailty and weakness; and so are taught humility, thankfulness, and resignation to the will of God:

and experience, hope;

hope is a gift of God's grace, and is implanted in regeneration, but abounds, increases, and becomes more strong and lively by experience of the love, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness of God.

Romans 5:5

And hope maketh not ashamed

As a vain hope does, things not answering to expectation, it deceives, and is lost; but the grace of hope is of such a nature, as that it never fails deceives, or disappoints: it neither makes ashamed, nor have persons that have any reason to be ashamed of it; neither of the grace itself, which is a good one; nor of the ground and foundation of it, the person and righteousness of Christ; nor of the object of it, eternal glory:

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

By "the love of God" is meant, not that love by which we love God, for hope does not depend upon, nor is it supported by our love and obedience to God; but the love of God to us, of which some instances are given in the following verses: us is said "to be shed abroad in our hearts"; which denotes the plenty and abundance of it, and the full and comfortable sensation which believers have of it: "by the Holy Spirit": who leads into, and makes application of it: "and is given to us": for that

purpose, as the applier of all grace, the Comforter, and the earnest of heaven. Now the love which the Spirit sheds abroad in the heart, is the source and spring, both of justification itself, which is owing to the free grace of God, and of all the effects of it, as peace with God, access to the throne of grace, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, the usefulness of afflictions, and the stability of hope, and is here alleged as the reason of all.

Romans 5:6

For when we were yet without strength

The apostle having mentioned the love of God proceeds to give an instance, and which is a full proof and demonstration of it, which is, that

in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

That Christ died is certain; the death of Christ was foretold in prophecy, typified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, was spoken of by himself, both before and since his death; his enemies have never denied it; and this was the sum of the ministry of the apostles, and is the great article of faith: and that the death of Christ is a singular instance of the love of God, is evident by considering the person that died, the Son of God in human nature, his own, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son; the concern which God had in it, by willing, ordering, and appointing it, awaking the sword of justice against him, not sparing him, but delivering him up for us all; also the nature, kind, and manner of his death, and particularly the persons for whom he died, here described: he "died for the ungodly"; not for himself, he had no sins of his own to die for, nor did he want any happiness to procure; nor for angels, but for men; and these not holy, just, and good men, but ungodly; and not as a mere martyr, or only by way of example to them, and so for their good; but as the Syriac version reads it, *רשיא רשיא*, "in the room", or "stead of the ungodly", as their surety to make satisfaction for their sins. The Jews have a notion of the Messiah's being a substitute, and standing in the place and stead of sinners; and they say F24,

``that Aaron filled up the place of the first Adam, and was brought near in the room of him;"

which is true of Christ, the antitype of Aaron. On those words, "I will give a man for thee", (Isaiah 43:4); the doctors F25 say,

``do not read Adam, but Edom; for when

God removes the decree (or punishment) from a particular man, he provides for the attribute of justice in the room of the man that sinned, (Mwdam ab rxa vya) , "another man that comes from Edom";"

referring, as I think, to (Isaiah 63:1) . And this their character of ungodly shows, that not goodness in man, but love in God, was the moving cause of Christ's dying for them; and that the end of his dying was to atone for their ungodliness: and to illustrate the love of God the more towards them in this instance, they are said to be "without strength" at that time; being so enfeebled by sin, that they were not capable of fulfilling the law, of atoning for the transgressions of it, of redeeming themselves from slavery, of beginning and carrying on a work of holiness their hearts, nor indeed of doing one good thing. Add to all this, that Christ died for these persons in due time; in the most fit, proper, and convenient season to illustrate the love and grace of God; when man appeared both weak and wicked; when the weakness of the legal dispensation had been sufficiently evinced, and the wickedness of man, both among Jews and Gentiles, was at a very great height: or rather by "due time" is meant the "fulness of time", (Galatians 4:4) (Ephesians 1:10) ; the time appointed in council by God, agreed to by Christ, and fixed in prophecy; before the departure of the sceptre from Judah, the destruction of the second temple, and at the close of Daniel's weeks.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 98. 3.

F25 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93. 4.

Romans 5:7

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die

The design of this, and the following verse, is to show that Christ's dying for ungodly persons is an instance of kindness that is matchless and unparalleled. By "a righteous man", is not meant a truly gracious, holy man; nor one that is made righteous by the obedience of Christ; but one that is so in his own eyes, and in the esteem of others, being outwardly moral and righteous before men; who keeps to the letter of the law, and does, as he imagines, what that externally requires: such were the Pharisees among the Jews, who, though they were had in much outward esteem and veneration among the people, yet were rather feared than loved; and it would have been a difficult thing to have found a person that

would cheerfully venture, and lay down his life for any of that complexion and cast:

yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

By "a good man", is not meant a man made so by the grace of God, and who is indeed truly and properly the only good man; but a liberal and beneficent man, who was very bountiful in his charitable distributions to the poor, and very liberal in contributing towards the charge of sacrifices, repairs of the temple and did more this way than what the law obliged to. Now for such a man perhaps there might be some found so daring and hardy, as to venture and lay down their lives, when there was any danger of his, or any necessity for so doing; so great an interest such men had in the affections of the people. And so the Jews F26 distinguish between (qydu) , "a righteous man", and (dyox) , "a good man". They say F1,

``there is a righteous man that is good, and there is a righteous man that is not good; but he that is good for heaven, and the creatures, i.e. for God and men, this is (bwj qydu) , "a righteous good man"; but he that is good to God, and evil to men, this is (bwj wnyav qydu) , "a righteous man that is not good"."

The whole body of the people of the Jews were divided into three sorts: take a short sentence out of their Talmud F2, not to support the justness of the characters, but for the sake of this threefold division of the people:

``three things are said concerning the paring of the nails, (qydu) , "a righteous man" buries them, (dyox) , "a good man" burns them, (evr) , "a wicked man" casts them away."

Now to this division of the people the apostle alludes; and there is in the words a beautiful gradation, scarcely for one of the (Myqydu) , "righteous men", who does just what he is obliged to do by the law, and no more, will any die; perhaps it may be, that for one of (Mydyox) , "the good men", who are very liberal to the poor, and towards defraying all the expenses of the temple service, in which they exceed the strict demands of the law, some may be found willing to die; but who will die for the (Myevr) , "the wicked and ungodly", the profligate and abandoned part of the people? not one, but Christ died for the ungodly: wherefore if instances could be

produced of men's dying either for righteous men, or good men, these would not come up to the instance of Christ's dying for men, who were neither righteous nor good.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Maimon in Misn Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 10, 13. Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 4. sect. 6. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2. Kimchi in Psal. iv. 3.

F1 T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.

F2 T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 18. 1. & Niddah, fol. 17. 1.

Romans 5:8

But God commendeth his love towards us

That is, he hath manifested it, which was before hid in his heart; he has given clear evidence of it, a full proof and demonstration of it; he has so confirmed it by this instance, that there is no room nor reason to doubt of it; he has illustrated and set it off with the greater lustre by this circumstance of it,

in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

God's elect were sinners in Adam, in whom they were naturally and federally, as all mankind were; hence polluted and guilty; and so they are in their own persons whilst unregenerate: they are dead in sin, and live in it, commit it, are slaves unto it, and are under the power and dominion of it; and many of them are the chief and vilest of sinners; and such they were considered when Christ died for them: but are not God's people sinners after conversion? yes; but sin has not the dominion over them; their life is not a course of sinning, as before; and besides, they are openly justified and pardoned, as well as renewed, and sanctified, and live in newness of life; so that their characters now are taken, not from their worse, but better part. And that before conversion is particularly mentioned here, to illustrate the love of God to them, notwithstanding this their character and condition; and to show that the love of God to them was very early; it anteceded their conversion; it was before the death of Christ for them; yea, it was from everlasting: and also to express the freeness of it, and to make it appear, that it did not arise from any loveliness in them; or from any love in them to him; nor from any works of righteousness done by them, but from his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Romans 5:9

Much more then being now justified by his blood

The apostle here argues from justification by Christ to salvation by him, there being a certain and inseparable connection between these two; whoever is justified shall be saved; and speaks of justification "as being now by his blood". Justification in God's mind from eternity proceeded upon the suretyship engagements of Christ to be performed in time; the Old Testament saints were justified of God with a view to the blood of the Lamb which was to be shed; this blood was "now" shed, and an application of justification by it was "now" made to the persons spoken of; which is the reason of this way of speaking. The blood of Christ intends his death, as appears from the context, and shows it to be a violent death; death by the effusion of blood. There is an emphasis upon it, "his blood"; not the blood of bulls and goats, nor of a mere innocent creature, but of Christ the Son of God; which is therefore efficacious to all the purposes for which it was shed, and particularly justification. This being ascribed to it, shows the concern Christ had in it, his blood is here put for the whole matter of justification; the shedding of that being the finishing part of it; and that our justification before God proceeds upon the foot of a satisfaction made to the law and justice of God: hence such as are interested in it,

shall be saved from wrath through him:

not from wrath, as a corruption in their own hearts, which oftentimes breaks forth; nor as appearing among the people of God one towards another, which is sometimes very bitter; or as in their avowed enemies, the effects of which they often feel; nor from the wrath of devils, which is as the roaring of a lion; but from the wrath of God, from a sense and apprehension of it in their own consciences, which the law works; from which justification by the blood of Christ frees them; though under first awakenings they feel it, and sometimes, under afflictive dispensations of Providence, are ready to fear it: and also from the infliction of vindictive wrath or punishment for sin; for though they are as deserving of it as others, yet as they are not appointed to it, so they are entirely delivered from it, through Christ's sustaining it in their room and stead: wherefore they are secure from it both in this life, and in the world to come.

Romans 5:10

For if when we were enemies

For the further illustration of the love of God expressed to sinners, by the death of his Son, the state and condition God's elect were in when Christ died for them is taken notice of; they "were enemies"; to God, to his being, perfections, purposes, and providences; to Christ, to his person, offices, grace, and righteousness; to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, and his divine operations and influences; to the people of God, and to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ; which enmity is deeply rooted in their minds, is causeless, and undeserved, and is implacable, and irreconcilable without the power and grace of God; which grace of God is wonderfully displayed in the reconciliation of such persons,

by the death of his Son.

Reconciliation implies a former state of friendship, a breach of that friendship, and a making of it up again; which no ways contradicts the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to his people; for this is not a reconciliation of God to them, but of them to God:

we were reconciled to God;

not God to us; and this reconciliation is for their sins, an atonement for them, rather than of their persons; which being done, their persons are reconciled, not to the love, grace, and mercy of God, or to his affections, in which they always had a share, but to the justice of God injured and offended by their sins; and so both justice and holiness on one side, and love, grace, and mercy on the other, are reconciled together, in the business of their salvation; which is brought about by the sufferings and death of Christ: this expresses the wonderful love of God, since this reconciliation arises purely from himself; the scheme of it is of his own contriving; he, whose justice was affronted, and whose law was broken, took the first step towards it, and conducted the whole affair; and which was effected at the expense of the blood and life of his own Son, and that for persons who were enemies to them both. In consequence of this, another reconciliation of them is made by the Spirit of God in regenerations, of which notice is taken in this passage:

much more being reconciled:

to God, as a sovereign God, in his decrees, in his providences, and in the method of salvation by his Son; to Christ, to the way of salvation by him, so as to submit both to his righteousness for justification, and to the sceptre of his kingdom, to be ruled and governed by it;

to the Spirit, so as to be led by him, to walk after him, and to depend upon him for the carrying on, and finishing the good work of grace begun in them; to the people of God, so as to love them, and delight in their company; and to the Gospel and ordinances, so as highly to value them, long after them, and take pleasure in them. Now from both these reconciliations is inferred the sure and certain salvation of persons so reconciled:

we shall be saved by his life;

by the life of Christ, and which designs not so much his life as God; or his living in the hearts of his people by faith; though neither of them are to be excluded; but his life, as man, and that not either his private or public life, as man here on earth, though this has an influence upon, and a concern in the business of salvation; but more especially here is meant the interceding life of Christ in heaven, where he lives, and ever lives to make intercession for his people, and to see the salvation he has obtained by his death applied unto them, and they put into the possession of it.

Romans 5:11

And not only so, but we also joy in God

Something seems here to be understood, and which is to be supplied thus; not only we are saved by his life, and from wrath through him; not only are we reconciled to God by his Son, and Spirit; not only Christ has died for us while sinners and ungodly; not only do we glory in tribulations, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: "but we also joy in God"; himself, as our covenant God and Father in Christ, as the God of all grace, peace, and salvation; in his perfections, as engaged on our side, and as glorified in our salvation; in the purposes of God, and his covenant transactions with his Son, as they are made known in the everlasting Gospel; in all his providential dispensations, which are mercy and truth; and in our being of him in Christ, and Christ's being made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; in all the blessings of grace we receive from him, the glory of which is his due; and in his sight and presence, and in the enjoyment of him. The means by which saints come at this joying and glorying in God, is

through our Lord Jesus Christ;

not the light of nature, nor the law of Moses, nor any works of righteousness done by men, nor through angels or saints, but Christ, and him only; for it is only in and through him that God is their covenant God and

Father; by him only have they the agreeable view of his glorious perfections; in him only all his purposes and promises have their fulfilment; it is by his hands, and through his blood, that all the blessings of grace are conveyed to them; their access to God is only by him; and by him they give the praise and glory of every mercy to him. And the ground of this joy is the expiation of sin by Christ,

by whom we have now received the atonement; atonement is not made, but received by us; which denotes the application of the atoning blood and sacrifice of Christ to the conscience, the Spirit's witness of interest in it, and the office of faith, as a recipient of it: it is not faith, nor anything else of the creature's, that makes the atonement, only Christ; but faith receives it from him, and by him; which, as it is the ground of present joying in God, so it is the foundation of hope of future glory: the word "now" refers to the Gospel dispensation. The poor Jews are at the utmost loss about atonement: sometimes they tell F3 us it is by confession, repentance, and good works; sometimes by beneficence and hospitality F4; sometimes they say their captivity is their atonement F5; and, at other times, that death expiates all their sins F6. Blessed be God for the atoning sacrifice of Christ!

FOOTNOTES:

- F3 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 85. 2. & 86. 1. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 1.
 F4 T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1. & Roshhashana, fol. 18. 1, & Yebamot, fol. 105. 1.
 F5 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 2. sect. 4.
 F6 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 1. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Yoma, fol. 42. 1. Gloss in ib.

Romans 5:12

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world

The design of these words, and of the following, is to show how men came to be in the condition before described, as "ungodly", (Romans 5:6) , "sinners", (Romans 5:8) , and "enemies", (Romans 5:10) ; and to express the love of Christ in the redemption of them; and the largeness of God's grace to all sorts of men: the connection of them is with (Romans 5:11) , by which it appears that the saints have not only an expiation of

sin by the blood of Christ, but a perfect righteousness, by which they are justified in the sight of God; and the manner how they came at it, or this becomes theirs, together with the necessity of their having such an one, are here declared: by the "one man" is meant Adam the first man, and parent of mankind, who is mentioned by name in (Romans 5:14) ; sin which came by him designs a single sin, and not many, even the first sin of Adam, which goes by different names, as "sin" here, "transgression", (Romans 5:14) , the "offence" or "fall", (Romans 5:15 Romans 5:17 Romans 5:18) , "disobedience", (Romans 5:19) , and whatever was the first step or motive to it, which led to it, whether pride, unbelief, or concupiscence, it was finished by eating the forbidden fruit; and is called sin emphatically, because it contained all sin in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences. Hence may be learnt the origin of moral evil among men, which comes not from God, but man; of this it is said, that it "entered into the world"; not the world above, there sin entered by the devil; but the world below, and it first entered into paradise, and then passed through the whole world; it entered into men by the snares of Satan, and by him it enters into all the inhabitants of the world; into all men that descend from him by ordinary generation, and that so powerfully that there is no stopping of it. It has entered by him, not by imitation, for it has entered into such as never sinned after the similitude of his transgression, infants, or otherwise death could not have entered into them, and into such who never heard of it, as the Heathens; besides, sin entered as death did, which was not by imitation but imputation, for all men are reckoned dead in Adam, being accounted sinners in him; add to this, that in the same way Christ's righteousness comes upon us, which is by imputation, Adam's sin enters into us, or becomes ours; upon which death follows,

and death by sin;

that is, death has entered into the world of men by sin, by the first sin of the first man; not only corporeal death, but a spiritual or moral one, man, in consequence of this, becoming "dead in sin", deprived of righteousness, and averse, and impotent to all that is good; and also an eternal death, to which he is liable; for "the wages of sin is death", (Romans 6:23) ; even eternal death: all mankind are in a legal sense dead, the sentence of condemnation and death immediately passed on Adam as soon as he had sinned, and upon all his posterity;

and so death passed upon all men;

the reason of which was,

for that,

or because "in him"

all have sinned:

all men were naturally and seminally in him; as he was the common parent of mankind, he had all human nature in him, and was also the covenant head, and representative of all his posterity; so that they were in him both naturally and federally, and so "sinned in him"; and fell with him by his first transgression into condemnation and death. The ancient Jews, and some of the modern ones, have said many things agreeably to the apostle's doctrine of original sin; they own the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity to condemnation and death;

`` through the sin of the first man (say they F7) (tm hta) , "thou art dead"; for he brought death into the world:"

nothing is more frequently said by them than that Adam and Eve, through the evil counsel of the serpent, (גרימו מותא לון ולכל לִמָּא) , "were the cause of death to themselves and to all the world" F8; and that through the eating of the fruit of the tree, (מותא כל דיירי ארא) , "all the inhabitants of the earth became guilty of death" F9: and that this was not merely a corporeal death, they gather from the doubling of the word in the threatening, "in dying thou shalt die", (Genesis 2:17) (margin);

`` this doubled death, say they F11, without doubt is the punishment of their body by itself, (ולנפש בפני מָה) , and also of the "soul by itself"''

They speak of some righteous persons who died, not for any sin of their own, but purely on the account of Adam's sin; as Benjamin the son of Jacob, Amram the father of Moses, and Jesse the father of David, and Chileab the son of David F12, to these may be added Joshua the son of Nun, and Zelophehad and Levi: the corruption and pollution of human nature through the sin of Adam is clearly expressed by them;

`` when Adam sinned, (say they F13,) he "drew upon him a defiled power, (ולכל בני לִמָּא) , "and defiled himself and all the people of the "world"''

Again F14,

`` this vitiosity which comes from the sin and infection of our first parents, has invaded both faculties of the rational soul, the understanding by which we apprehend, and the will by which we desire."

This corruption of nature they call (יֵה הָרָ) , "the evil imagination", which, they say F15, is planted in a man's heart at the time of his birth; and others say F16 that it is in him before he is born: hence Philo the Jew says F17, that (συμψυεω το αμαρτανον εστ) , "to sin is connatural", to every man that is born, even though a good man; and talks F18 of (συγγεγηνηνον κουκον) , "evil that is born with us", and of F19 (συγγενειω κηρεω) , "spots that are of necessity born with" every mortal man. And so his countrymen F20 often speak of it as natural and inseparable to men; yea, they represent Adam as the root and head of mankind, in whom the whole world and all human nature sinned: descanting on those words, "as one that lieth upon the top of a mast", (Proverbs 23:34) ;

`` this (say they F21) is the first man who was (ראש לכל בני אדם) , "an head to all the children of men": for by means of wine death was inflicted on him, and he was the cause of bringing the sorrows of death into the world."

And in another place, speaking of Adam, they say F23, that

`` he was (יקר בריאה של גלם) , "the root of the creation", or "of the men of the world"; and death was inflicted upon him and on his seed, because he sinned one sin in eating of the tree."

And it is observed,

`` that (הא הידיה) , the "He" demonstrative is not prefixed in Scripture to proper names, which yet is to the word "Adam"; the reason is, (say they F24,) because in Adam all his posterity are pointed at, and the whole human species designed."

Again, they observe F25, that

`` the end of man is to die, of which this is the reason, because (מיני האדם) , "mankind" has sinned; that is, the nature of which he is composed, or in other words, Adam and Eve have sinned."

Once more F26

“when he (Adam) sinned, הַגֵּלְמָ כְּלוֹ חַטָּא (כל) , “all the whole world sinned”, and his sin we bear;”

and F1 that

“the whole congregation of Israel have need of atonement for the sin of the first Adam, for he was (חֲשׂוּב כְּכֹל הָרֵחָה) , reckoned as the whole congregation;”

F7 Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2.

F8 Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1, 2, 3, 4. & 36. 3. 4. & 37. 2. & 46. 4. & 54. 3. & 67. 3. & 86. 1. & 98. 1. in Exod. fol. 106. 1. & 127. 2. in Lev. fol. 46. 2. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 225. 3. Caphtor, fol. 37. 2.

F9 Targum in Ruth iv. 22. & in Eccles. vii. 29.

F11 R. Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, l. 4. c. 41.

F12 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 36. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. & 44. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. & Numb. fol. 83. 2.

F13 Zohar in Gen. fol. 37. 1.

F14 Menasseh ben Israel Praefat. ad lib. de Fragilitate Humana.

F15 Aben Ezra in Psal. li. 5. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14, 3. 4.

F16 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 30. 1.

F17 De Vita Mosis, p. 675.

F18 De Praemiis, p. 920.

F19 De Nomin. Mutat. p. 1051.

F20 Kimchi in Psal. li. 5. Menah ben Israel de Fragilitate, par. 1. p. 2.

F21 Bemidhar Rabba, fol. 198. 3.

F23 Caphtor, fol. 102. 1.

F24 Menasseh ben Israel de cermino Vitae, c. 3. sect. 8. p. 198.

F25 En Jaacob, par. 1. fol. 19. 4.

F26 Zohar in Lev fol. 46. 2. R. Menachem Rakanati apud Voisin. Obs. in Pugionem Fidei, p. 590.

F1 Zohar in Gen. fol. 76. 3. & 36. 3.

Romans 5:13

For until the law, sin was in the world

This is a proof of sin's having entered into the world, by one man's transgression of the positive law of God, which forbid him the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; since it was in the world before the law of Moses was given: the sin of Adam and the guilt of that were in the world before, and came upon all men to condemnation; the general corruption of nature appeared before; and actual sins, and transgressions of all sorts were committed before; as by the immediate posterity of Adam, by the men of the old world, by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, by the patriarchs and their posterity, by the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others. They were all guilty of sin, corrupted by it, and under the dominion of it, except such as were released from it by the grace of God: now when sin is said to be until this time, the meaning is not that it existed and continued until the law of Moses took place, and then ceased; for that law did not, and could not take away sin, it rather increased it, at least it became more known by it; but that it was in being before it, and had influence and power over the sons of men, so as to subject them to death:

but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

This looks like an objection, that if there was no law before Moses's time, then there was no sin, nor could any action of man be known or accounted by them as sinful, or be imputed to them to condemnation; or rather it is a concession, allowing that where there is no law, sin is not imputed; but there was a law before that law of Moses, which law was transgressed, and the sin or transgression of it was imputed to men to condemnation and death, as appears from what follows.

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses

Though the law of Moses was not yet given, death exerted itself, and extended its dominion over all the sons and daughters of Adam, during the interval between Adam and Moses; which clearly shows that sin was in the world, and that there must be a law in being, which that was a transgression of: death is represented as a king, as sin and Satan sometimes are; and indeed, death reigns by sin, and Satan both by sin and death; their empires rise, stand, and fall together. So Bildad calls death “the king of terrors”, (Job 18:14) ; and a very formidable and powerful king he is; his dominion is very large, his power uncontrollable, and the dread

of him very great, especially to Christless sinners. The Jews say F2, that at the resurrection the world will be renewed, and will not be as at the first, when מוֹתָא בְּלִמְתָּא (דְּשִׁלִּיט) , “death reigned in the world”; referring to the same period of time the apostle here does. The subjects of his government were not only adult persons, who had been guilty of many actual transgressions, but he reigned

even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

This does not exclude the dominion of death over such who had sinned after the likeness of Adam, but rather confirms its power over them; nor does it intend adult Gentiles, who did not sin in the same manner, nor against the same law, as Adam did; but it designs infants, not yet guilty of actual sin; and therefore since death reigns over them, who only holds and exercises his dominion by virtue of sin, it follows, that they must have original sin in them; the guilt of Adam's transgression must be imputed to them, and the corruption of nature, from him, derived unto them, or it could not reign over them. A child of a year old, the Jewish doctors F3 say, has not tasted the taste of sin, that is, has not committed actual sin; and observe F4, that young children die on account of the sins of their parents: but the true reason of their dying is here suggested by the apostle; which is the transgression of Adam:

who is the figure of him that was to come;

meaning, either his posterity that were to come out of his loins, whose figure, type, and representative he was; or rather Christ, who is sometimes called (ο ερχομενω) , “he that was to come”; and the Arabic version reads the words thus, “who was a type of Adam that was expected”; that is, of Christ the second Adam, that was expected to come, according to the promise and prophecy: of him the first Adam was a type, in his human nature, in the formation and quality of it; as the first Adam was made by God of the virgin earth, the second Adam was born of a virgin; as the first, so the second Adam was pure, holy, upright, and wise; in his office, as Lord of the world, head of the woman, priest in his house, and prophet to his posterity; in his marriage with Eve, a figure of the church; but in nothing more clearly than in his being a covenant head to all his offspring; and this is what the apostle chiefly designs, since he runs the parallel between them on this account in the following verses; showing, that as the one conveyed sin and death to all his seed, so the other

communicates righteousness and life to all that belong to him. So the Jews say F5, that by Adam is intimated the righteous branch, the Messiah; and that (Ἐψωμ δωσ αωη Μδα δωσ) , “the secret of Adam is the secret of the Messiah”.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 96. 1.

F3 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2.

F4 Massecheth Calah, fol. 17. 2.

F5 R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 3. & 3. 1.

Romans 5:15

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift

By “the offence”, or “fall”, as the word signifies, is meant the first sin of Adam; by which he offended God, and fell from that estate in which he was created, and all his posterity with him; and by the “free gift” is meant, the righteousness of Christ, which justifies from that, and all other offences: now, though there is a great likeness between Adam and Christ; both are men, the first Adam is called “the one man”, and so is the second Adam Jesus Christ; partly for the sake of the comparison between him and the first, and also to express the truth of his human nature; and because the Redeemer ought to be a man, though not a mere man; both are sole authors of what they convey to their respective offspring, Adam of sin, Christ of righteousness; both convey single things, Adam only one sin, not more, for when he had committed one sin, he broke the covenant made with him and his posterity, and so ceased in after acts to be a representative of them; Christ conveys his righteousness, or obedience to the law, without any additional works of righteousness of ours to complete it; and both convey what they do, “to all” their respective offspring: yet there is a dissimilitude between them, as to the manner of conveyance and the effects thereof; the offence or sin of Adam is conveyed in a natural way, or by natural generation, to all who descend from him in that manner; the righteousness of Christ is conveyed in a way of grace, to his spiritual seed: hence it is called, not only the “free gift”, but “the grace of God, and the gift by grace”, which is “by one man, Jesus Christ”; because of the grace of the Father, in fixing and settling the method of justification, by the righteousness of his Son; in sending him to work out one, that would be satisfying to law and justice; and in his gracious acceptance of it, on the behalf of his people, and the imputation of it to

them; and because of the grace of the Son in becoming man, in being made under the law, yea, made sin and a curse, in order to bring in an everlasting righteousness; and because of the grace of the Spirit, in revealing and applying it, and working faith to receive it; for as the righteousness itself is a free grace gift, bestowed upon unworthy persons, so is faith likewise, by which it is laid hold on and embraced: and as there is a disagreement in the manner of conveying these things, so likewise in the effects they have upon the persons to whom they are conveyed; and the apostle argues from the influence and effect the one has, to the far greater and better influence and effect the other has:

for if through the offence of one many be dead;

as all Adam's posterity are, not only subject to a corporeal death, but involved in a moral or spiritual, and liable to an eternal one, through the imputation of guilt, and the derivation of a corrupt nature from him: then

much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many;

that is, the righteousness of Christ, in which the grace of God is so illustrious, is much more effectual to the giving of life to all his seed and offspring; not barely such a life as Adam had in innocence, and which he lost by the offence, but a spiritual and an eternal one; which sheds the exuberance of this grace, which secures and adjudges to a better life than what was lost by the fall.

Romans 5:16

And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift,

&c.] The apostle goes on with the dissimilitude between the effects of Adam's sin, and Christ's righteousness:

for the judgment was by one to condemnation;

by "judgment" is meant, not the judgment of God, or the judiciary sentence pronounced by God on Adam and his posterity for sin; but the guilt of the one man's sin, which is imputed to all men to condemnation, on account of which the sentence of condemnation passed on all men; the law transgressed, became a ministration of condemnation to them:

but the free gift is of many offences unto justification;

the righteousness of Christ, which stands opposed to the guilt of Adam's sin, being imputed to all his offspring, is to the justification of them; and that not only from the guilt of that particular offence, but from many other offences, even all their actual sins and transgressions, of every sort; which is another instance of the exuberance, or abounding of the grace of God, in the righteousness of Christ, not only over the sin of the one man, but also over the sins of many, even all the elect of God; for the last clause may be also thus rendered, "the free gift is of the offences of many, unto justification".

Romans 5:17

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one

It may be rendered, "by one offence death reigned by one"; for it was the single sin of Adam, the first sin that was committed by him, which gave death its reigning power over the sons of men:

``Adam, say F6 the Jewish doctors, transgressed, (ל) פקודא חד דאורייתא, one commandment of the law,"

and was the cause of death to himself, and to all the world. These words are a repetition, with a further explanation, of (Romans 5:15); there it is said, "through the offence of one many be dead"; here "by one man's offence", or "by one offence, death reigned by one"; in which death is represented as a mighty monarch, a powerful king; and designs not only corporeal death, which has mounted the throne by sin, and is supported in its dominion by an ordinance of heaven; but also a moral or spiritual death, which has seized on all mankind, and reigns in every power and faculty of the soul of man; and likewise an eternal one, which will have power over all those, who have no part in the first resurrection: in (Romans 5:15), "the grace of God, and the gift by grace", are said to "abound unto many"; here they are said to

receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness:

by abundance of grace is designed, either something distinct from the justifying righteousness of Christ; such as the abundant grace and mercy of God, in regeneration and conversion; the various graces of the Spirit then implanted; the many things then wrought in the heart; the large discoveries! of pardoning grace, and the abundance of the love of God shed abroad in the soul by the Spirit: or rather the same with "the gift

of righteousness", because of the large display of the grace of God in it; by which "righteousness" is meant, not righteousness or holiness infused into us; but the righteousness of Christ, which is a free grace gift, and is enjoyed in a way of receiving; which denotes the act of faith, and supposes giving; and hence there is no room for boasting, but great reason for thankfulness: now such persons who have received this abundant grace and free gift,

shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ;

in corporeal life, they are not now subject to death as a penal evil, as other persons are, and though they die this death, they will triumph over it in the resurrection morn, they will rise again to everlasting life; they reign now in spiritual life over sin, Satan, and the world; and they will reign in eternal life, they will sit on thrones, wear crowns, and possess a kingdom of glory for ever and ever; and all by and through one, Jesus Christ, and not on account of any works, or merits of theirs.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Zohar in Num. fol. 52. 1. Vid. Caphtor, fol. 102. 1. supra citat.

Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one

Or by one offence, as before, the guilt of which is imputed to, and

[judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; which word is used in a legal sense, and intends condemnation to eternal death, as appears from the antithesis in the text; for if "justification of life", means an adjudging to eternal life, as it certainly does, the judgment or guilt, which is unto condemnation, must design a condemnation to eternal death, the just wages of sin: and this sentence of condemnation comes upon all men, all the sons of Adam without exception, even upon the elect of God themselves; though it is not executed upon them, but on their surety, whereby they are delivered from it:

even so by the righteousness of one, [the free gift] came upon all men to justification of life;

the righteousness of Christ being freely imputed without works, as it is to all the men that belong to the second Adam, to all his seed and offspring, is their justification of life, or what adjudges and entitles them to

eternal life. The sentence of justification was conceived in the mind of God from eternity, when his elect were ordained unto eternal life, on the foot of his Son's righteousness; this passed on Christ at his resurrection from the dead, and on all his people as considered in him, when they, in consequence of it, were quickened together with him; and this passes upon the conscience of a sinner at believing, when he may, as he should, reckon himself alive unto God, and is what gives him a right and title to everlasting life and glory.

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,

&c.] Agreeably to this the Jews say F7, that

``for the sin of the first man, all that are born of him, (Myevr wyhy), "become wicked"''

This is the sum of what is said in the foregoing verses, that as by Adam's sin all his posterity are made sinners, and so are brought under a sentence of condemnation; in like manner by the obedience of Christ, all his seed are made righteous, and come under a sentence of justification of life: the persons made sinners are said to be "many", in opposition to the "one man", by whose disobedience they became so, and because there is an exception of one, even Jesus Christ; and mean all the natural descendants of Adam, who are many, and are so called, to answer to the subjects of justification in the next clause: what they are made sinners by, is "the disobedience of one man, Adam"; and by the first and single disobedience of his, in eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, by which they "were made sinners": the meaning of which is not, that they became sufferers for it, or subject to death on the account of it; the word used will not bear such a sense, but signifies men guilty of sin, and sometimes the worst and chief of sinners; besides, the apostle had expressed that before; add to this, that the sons of Adam could not be sufferers for his sin, or subject to death on account of it, if they were not made sinners by it, or involved in the guilt or it: and though the posterity of Adam are habitually sinners, that is, derive corrupt nature from Adam, yet this is not meant here; but that they are become guilty, through the imputation of his sin to them; for it is by the disobedience of another they are made sinners, which must be by the imputation of that disobedience to them; he sinned, and they sinned in him, when they had as

yet no actual existence; which could be no other way, than by imputation, as he was reckoned and accounted their head and representative, and they reckoned and accounted in him, and so have sinned in him. This is also evident, from the sentence of condemnation and death passing upon all men for it; and even upon those, who had not actually sinned; to which may be added, that Adam's posterity are made sinners through his disobedience, in the same way as Christ's seed are made righteous by his obedience, which is by the imputation of it to them;

so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;

not by their own obedience; nor by their own obedience and Christ's together; but by his sole and single obedience to the law of God: and the persons made righteous by it are not all the posterity of Adam, and yet not a few of them; but "many", even all the elect of God, and seed of Christ; these are all made righteous in the sight of God, are justified from all their sins, and entitled to eternal life and happiness.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 97. 1.

Romans 5:20

Moreover, the law entered

By "the law" is meant, not the law of nature, much less the law of sin; rather the ceremonial law, which came in over and above the moral law; it entered but for a time; by which sin abounded, and appeared very sinful; and through it the grace of God much more abounded, in the sacrifice of Christ prefigured by it: but the moral law, as it came by Moses, is here intended; which entered with great pomp and solemnity on Mount Sinai; and intervened, or came between Adam's sin and Christ's sacrifice; and also came in besides, or over and above the promise of life by Christ; and may moreover be said to enter into the conscience of a sinner, with the power and energy of the Spirit of God: and the end of its entrance is,

that the offence might abound;

meaning either the sin of Adam, he had been speaking of under that name, that that itself, and the imputation of it to his posterity, and also the pollution of human nature by it, together with all the aggravating circumstances of it, might appear more manifest; or sin in general, any and all actual transgressions, which

abound through the law's discovering the evil nature of them, and so taking away all excuse, or pretext of ignorance: by prohibiting them, whereby the corrupt nature of man becomes more eager after them; and by accusing, threatening, terrifying, and condemning, on account of them: one view of the apostle in this, doubtless, is to show, that there can be no justification by the law:

but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

sin has abounded in human nature, in all the individuals of it; and grace has superabounded in the same nature, being assumed by the Son of God, and united to him, who has appeared in it "full of grace and truth", (John 1:14) : sin has abounded in all the powers and faculties of the soul, in the understanding, will, and affections, of an unregenerate man; but in regeneration, the grace of God much more abounds in the same powers and faculties, enlightening the understanding, subduing the will, and influencing the affections with love to divine things: sin abounded in the Gentile world, before the preaching of the Gospel in it; but afterwards grace did superabound in the conversion of multitudes in it from idols, to serve the living God; and where sin has abounded in particular persons to a very great height, grace has exceeded it, as in Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Saul, and others.

Romans 5:21

That as sin hath reigned unto death

This is another end of the law's entrance, or rather an illustration of the grace of God, by comparing the reigns of sin and grace together: sin has such a power over man in a state of nature, as amounts to a dominion; it has not only an enticing, ensnaring power, to draw into a compliance with it, and an obstructive power to hinder that which is good, and an operative one of that which is evil, and a captivating, enslaving one to the same; but it has a kingly, governing, and commanding power: its dominion is universal as to men, and with respect both to the members of the body, and faculties of the soul; it is supported by laws, which are its lusts; and has its voluntary subjects, to whom it gives wages; its reign is very cruel and tyrannical; it is "unto death" corporeal, moral, or spiritual, and eternal. The ancient Jews often represent sin in the same light; they frequently speak F8 of (jlvv erh ruy) , "the corruption of nature reigning" over men; and say F9: that he is (Klm) "a king" over the

several members of the body, which answer to him at the word of command. "The old and foolish king" in (Ecclesiastes 4:13) , is commonly interpreted by them of sin; which they say F11 is called "a king", because he rules in the world, over the children of men, and because all hearken to him: it is a petition much used by them F12,

``let not the evil imagination or corruption of nature "rule" over me:"

and on the other hand, they represent grace, or a principle of goodness, as a king, reigning over the corruption of nature; thus interpreting these words, "my son, fear thou the Lord and the king", they ask F13,

``who is the king? the king (say they) (bwj ruy Klmh) , is "the good imagination", or principle of goodness, who reigns over the evil imagination, which is called a king."

And in another place F14 they say of a good man, that הַטוֹב יְהוָה הַמְלִיךְ , "caused the good imagination to reign" over the evil one; with which in some measure agrees what follows:

even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord;

by grace is meant, either grace as it is in the heart of God; which reigns or bears sway in man's salvation in all the parts of it, "through righteousness"; consistent with the justice of God, in a way in which that is glorified, through the redemption of Christ: it reigns "unto eternal life"; grace has promised, prepared it, and makes meet for it, and will introduce into it, and freely give it: it reigns "by Jesus Christ"; grace reigns by him, righteousness, or justice, is glorified by him, and eternal life is in him, through him, and by him: or grace as it is in the hearts of converted persons, is meant where it reigns, has the dominion, is the governing principle, and that in a way of righteousness and true holiness; and will reign until it is perfected in glory, or is crowned with eternal life; all which are by Jesus Christ, namely, grace, righteousness, and life.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

F9 Abot. R. Nathan, c. 16. fol. 5. 2. Targum in Eccl. ix. 14. Midrash Koheleth, fol. 80. 1.

F11 Zohar in Gen. fol. 102. 1. Midrash Koheleth, fol. 70. 2. Caphtor, fol. 20. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14. 4.

Jarchi in Eccl. iv. 13.

F12 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 1. Shaare Zion, fol. 73.

1. Seder Tephilot, fol. 3. 1. Ed. Basil.

F13 Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 218. 1.

F14 Midrash Koheleth, fol. 78. 3.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 6

The Apostle having finished his design concerning the doctrine of justification, refutes the charge brought against it as a licentious doctrine, and prevents any ill use that might be made of it by men of evil minds, justified persons by the strongest arguments, and with the best of motives to holiness of life and conversation: he saw, that whereas he had affirmed in the preceding chapter, that sin being made to abound by the law, in the condemnation of sinners, the grace of God the more abounded in their justification and pardon; that some would rise up and object, that this doctrine countenances men's continuance in sin, and opens a door to all manner of iniquity; and that others would abuse this doctrine, and encourage themselves in a vicious course of life, upon this mistaken notion, that the grace of God would be the more illustrious by it; all which is suggested in Ro 6:1, to which an answer is returned in Ro 6:2, with an abhorrence of everything of this kind; and by an argument, showing the absurdity and inconsistency of it, seeing persons dead to sin, as justified ones are, cannot live in it: and that they are dead to sin, and under obligation to live unto righteousness, he argues from their baptism into Christ's death, which represents their being dead with Christ, and buried with him, Ro 6:3,4, and likewise the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and theirs by him, whereby they are both fitted and obliged to walk in newness of life; since they are, and should be like him, as in his death, so in his resurrection from the dead: and the rather, as they are implanted in him, as the branches in the vine, Ro 6:4,5, and especially as it was the great end of his death, that by the crucifixion of sin with him, it might so be destroyed, that his people should be no more servants to it, Ro 6:6, this being proved, that justified ones are dead to sin, the apostle argues upon it, that such are freed from sin, Ro 6:7, and therefore ought not, and cannot live in it; for this must be given into as an article of faith, that such as are dead with Christ live, and shall live a life of communion with him, Ro 6:8, which is inconsistent with living in sin: he further argues from the resurrection of Christ, which was not to die more, Ro 6:9, and suggests, that in like manner, those who have been dead and buried, and

risen with him, which their baptism signifies, should not live in sin, which is no other than dying again; and to strengthen this, directs to the ends of Christ's death and resurrection, Ro 6:10, the end of the one being unto sin, to finish, make an end of that, and be the death of it, and the end of the other, being living unto God; wherefore in like manner, such who profess to be Christ's, to be justified by his righteousness, to be baptized into his death, and to be risen with him, should account themselves dead unto sin, and so not live in it, and alive to God through the righteousness of Christ, and so live to his honour and glory, Ro 6:11, and having thus answered the objection, and removed the calumny, and set this matter in a clear light, the apostle proceeds to dehort from sinning, and to exhort to holiness of life, Ro 6:12,13, in which he compares sin to a tyrant, the lusts of it to the laws of such an one, and which therefore should not be obeyed; and the rather, as the wages of them are death, and have made the body already mortal; wherefore the members of it should not be employed in such service, but in the service of God: and whereas it might be objected, that sin is too strong and prevalent, and has got the mastery, and will keep its power, the apostle declares it as a promise of grace, that sin shall not have the dominion, Ro 6:14, giving this as a reason, because such as are justified and sanctified, are not under the law, as a covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace, of which this promise is a part; and in order to prevent an ill use of this doctrine, and remove an objection that might be made, that if not under the law, men are under no restraints, but may go on in sin without control, he answers it with his usual detestation, Ro 6:15, and argues the folly and absurdity of living in sin upon such an account, because it would make them servants of sin unto death, Ro 6:16, and so they were before conversion, but now were otherwise, for, which they had reason to be thankful, Ro 6:17, since through the grace of God they had yielded an hearty obedience to the Gospel; wherefore to obey sin would be to return to their former state of bondage; whereas being freed from the power and dominion of sin, they were now the servants of righteousness, and ought to act becoming such a character, Ro 6:18, wherefore it was but acting the part of reasonable men, it was but their reasonable service, to yield themselves servants, not to sin and uncleanness, but to righteousness and holiness, Ro 6:19, in order to engage to which, the apostle puts them in mind of their former state; how that when they were in subjection to sin, they had nothing to do with

the exercise of righteousness, Ro 6:20, and therefore as there was an alteration made in them, they ought to be just the reverse in their conduct and conversation; for he appeals to them, that they had no pleasure nor profit in their former course of life; which had brought upon them shame and confusion, and must have ended in death, had it not been for the grace of God, Ro 6:21, but now as they were delivered from the slavery and dominion of sin, they were under a better master, were servants to God; and the fruit of their service was holiness, and the issue of all would be everlasting life, Ro 6:22, which is illustrated by the contrary, Ro 6:23, the wages due from the service of sin, and which only could be expected from it, being death; whereas grace and holiness, the gift of God, issue in eternal life by Christ Jesus; in whose hands it is, and through whom it comes, and is enjoyed. Romans 6:1

ROMANS CHAPTER 6

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

COMMENTARY ROMANS 6

Romans 6:1

What shall we say then?

&c.] The apostle here obviates an objection he saw would be made against the doctrine he had advanced, concerning the aboundings of the grace of God in such persons and places, where sin had abounded; which if true, might some persons say, then it will be most fit and proper to continue in a sinful course of life, to give up ourselves to all manner of iniquity, since this is the way to make the grace of God abound yet more and more: now says the apostle, what shall we say to this? how shall we answer such an objection? shall we join with the objectors, and say as they do? and

shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

that is, shall we persist in a vicious way of living with this view, that the grace of God may be magnified

hereby? is it right to commit sin on such an account? or is this a fair inference, a just consequence, drawn from the doctrine of grace? To be sure it was not, the objection is without any ground and foundation; sin is not "per se", the cause of the glorifying God's grace, but "per accidens": sin of itself is the cause of wrath, and not of grace; but God has been pleased to take an occasion of magnifying his grace, in the forgiveness of sin: for it is not by the commission of sin, but by the pardon of it, that the grace of God is glorified, or made to abound. Moreover, grace in conversion is glorified by putting a stop to the reign of sin, and not by increasing its power, which would be done by continuing in it; grace teaches men not to live in sin, but to abstain from it; add to this, that it is owing to the want of grace, and not to the aboundings of it, that men at any time abuse, or make an ill use of the doctrines of grace; wherefore the apostle's answer is,

Romans 6:2

God forbid

By which he expresses his abhorrence of such a practice, and that this was a consequence which did not follow from the premises, and was far enough from his thoughts, and which he had in the greatest detestation: and he further argues against it by asking,

how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

There is a death for sin, a death in sin, and a death to sin; the latter is here mentioned, and persons may be said to be "dead to sin", both as justified and sanctified: justified persons are dead to sin, inasmuch as that is not imputed to them to condemnation and death; they are discharged from it; it cannot hurt them, or exert its damning power over them; it is crucified, abolished, and made an end of by Christ: sanctified persons are dead to sin; sin is not made their business, it is not their course of life; it is no longer a pleasure to them, but is loathsome and abominable; it is looked upon, not as a friend, but an enemy; it does not reign, it has not the dominion over them; it is subdued in them, and its power weakened; and as to the members of the flesh, and deeds of the body, it is mortified: to live in sin, is to live after the dictates of corrupt nature; and persons may be said to live in it, when they give up themselves to it, are bent upon it; when sin is their life, they delight in it, make it their work and business, and the whole course of their life is sinful: now those who are dead to sin,

cannot thus live in it, though sin may live in them; they may fall into sin, and lie in it some time, yet they cannot live in it: living in sin, is not only unbecoming the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, but is contrary to it; it is detestable to gracious minds, yea, it seems impossible they should live in it; which is suggested by this question, “how shall we?” &c. The thing is impracticable: for, for a gracious soul to live in sin, would be to die again, to become dead in sin, which cannot be; he that lives and believes in Christ shall never die, spiritually or eternally.

Romans 6:3

Know ye not that so many of us as,
etc.] You must know this, you cannot be ignorant of it, that whoever

were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death:

and therefore must be dead to sin, and consequently ought not to live, nor can they live in sin. This does not suppose, that some of this church were baptized persons, and others not; but that some might be baptized in water who were not baptized into Christ: there is a difference between being baptized in water in the name of Christ, and being baptized into Christ, which believers in their baptism are; by which is meant, not a being brought by it into union with Christ, which is either secretly from eternity, or openly at conversion, and both before the baptism of true believers; nor a being brought by it into the mystical body of Christ the church, for this also is before it; but rather it designs a being baptized, or a being brought by baptism into more communion with Christ, into a participation of his grace and benefits; or into the doctrine of Christ, and a more distinct knowledge of it: the power of which they feel upon their hearts, and so have really believed in Christ, heartily love him, and make a sincere profession of him; though rather the true meaning of the phrase “baptized into Christ”, I take to be, is to be baptized purely for the sake of Christ, in imitation of him, who has set us an example, and because baptism is an ordinance of his; it is to submit to it with a view to his glory, to testify our affection for him, and subjection to him, without laying any stress or dependence on it for salvation; such who are thus baptized, are “baptized into his death”; they not only resemble Christ in his sufferings and death, by being immersed in water, but they declare their faith in the death of Christ, and also share in the benefits of his death; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and

atonement: now this proves, that such persons are dead to sin, who are so baptized; for by the death of Christ, into which they are baptized, they are justified from sin; by the death of Christ, their old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; besides, believers in baptism profess themselves to be dead to sin and the world, and their baptism is an obligation upon them to live unto righteousness.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death

The nature and end of baptism are here expressed; the nature of it, it is a “burial”; and when the apostle so calls it, he manifestly refers to the ancient and only way of administering this ordinance, by immersion; when a person is covered, and as it were buried in water, as a corpse is when laid the earth, and covered with it: and it is a burial with Christ; it is a representation of the burial of Christ, and of our burial with him as our head and representative, and that “into death”; meaning either the death of Christ as before, that is, so as to partake of the benefits of his death; or the death of sin, of which baptism is also a token; for believers, whilst under water, are as persons buried, and so dead; which signifies not only their being dead with Christ, and their communion with him in his death, but also their being dead to sin by the grace of Christ, and therefore ought not to live in it: for the apostle is still pursuing his argument, and is showing, from the nature, use, and end of baptism, that believers are dead to sin, and therefore cannot, and ought not, to live in it; as more fully appears from the end of baptism next mentioned;

that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;

for the end of baptism is not only to represent the death and burial, but also the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is here said to be “by the glory of the Father”, some read the words, “unto the glory of the Father”; meaning either, that the Father might be glorified hereby; or that Christ, being raised from the dead, might enjoy glory with the Father, as he does in human nature; but rather the phrase expresses the means by which, and not the end to which, Christ was raised from the dead: and by the “glory of the Father” is meant, the glorious power of the Father, which was eminently displayed in raising Christ from the dead;

and as baptism is designed to represent the resurrection of Christ, which is done by raising the person out of the water, so likewise to represent our resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace: whence it must be greatly incumbent on baptized believers, who are raised from the graves of sin by the power of Christ, to “walk in newness of life”; for since they are become new creatures, and have new hearts and new spirits given them, new principles of light, life, grace, and holiness implanted in them, and have entered into a new profession of religion, of which baptism is the badge and symbol, they ought to live a new life and conversation.

Romans 6:5

For if we have been planted together

This is not to be understood of an implantation of Jews and Gentiles together in One body; nor of an implantation of believers together in a church state; but of an implantation of Christ and his people together; which is openly done at conversion, in consequence of a secret union with him before; when they are transplanted from a state of nature, and are ingrafted into Christ; have the graces of the Spirit of God implanted in them, and grow up under the dews of grace, and shinings of the sun of righteousness upon them, and bring forth much fruit; now as these persons, by virtue of their secret union with Christ from eternity, as their head and representative, with whom they were crucified, in whom they died representatively, share in his death, enjoy the benefits of it, and feel its efficacy, and through it become dead to the law, sin, and the world, which is meant by

the likeness of his death;

so these same persons shall be also planted

in the likeness of his resurrection;

that is, they shall share in the benefits, and feel and enjoy the effects of it; not only their bodies will be raised at the last day, as their souls are now regenerated by virtue of it, and in resemblance to it; but their are, and shall be so influenced by his Spirit and grace, which has raised them from death to life, that they shall walk in newness of life; of which baptism is a lively representation, and to which it is a constant obligation.

Romans 6:6

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him

By the old man is meant the corruption of nature; called a man, because natural to men; it lives and dwells in them; it has spread itself over the whole man; it rules and governs in men; and consists of various parts and members, as a man does: it is called “old”, because it is the poison of the old serpent, with which man was infected by him from the beginning; it is derived from the first man that ever was; it is as old as the man is, in whom it is, and is likewise called so, with respect to its duration and continuance; and in opposition to, and contradistinction from, the new man, or principle of grace: it is called “ours”, because continual to us; it is in our nature, it cleaves to us, and abides in us. This name the apostle took from his countrymen the Jews, who were wont to call the vitiosity of nature hereby; so R. Aba on that passage, “the firstborn said to the younger, our father is old”, (Genesis 19:31) , asks, what is the meaning of this, “our father is old?” this, answers he, is the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, which is called (Nqz) , “old”, according to (Ecclesiastes 4:13) ; and is said to be old, (Mdah Me dlwnv) , “because it is born with the man” F15; or as the reason is elsewhere given F16, because it is joined to him from his birth, to his old age: this, they say F17, is with a man as soon as he is born, from the hour of his birth, as soon as ever he comes into the world. Now this is said to be “crucified with him”; that is, with Christ, when he was crucified: the Jews F18 have a notion that the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, (ljbty al) , will not be made to cease, or be abolished out of the world, till the King Messiah comes, and by him it is abolished: this is so crucified by the death, and at the cross of Christ, as that it cannot exert its damning power over believers; and is so crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ in them, as that it cannot reign over them, or exercise its domineering power over them; wherefore they are dead unto it, and that to them, and therefore cannot live in it; which is done,

that the body of sin might be destroyed:

by “the body of sin” is meant sin itself, which consists, as a body does, of various members; and also the power and strength of it, which the Jews F19 call (חילא דיה הר) , “the power of the evil imagination”; this is crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross by his sacrifice and satisfaction, that its damning power might be destroyed, abolished, and done away: and it is crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ, that its governing power might be took away, and that itself be

subdued, weakened, and laid under restraints, and its members and deeds mortified:

that henceforth we should not serve sin;

not that it should not be in us, for as yet, neither by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, nor by the power of his grace, is sin as to its being removed from the people of God: but that we should not serve it, make provision for it, indulge it and obey it, in the lusts thereof.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 1. Vid. Caphtor, fol. 20. 1.

F16 Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 2.

F17 Zohar in Gen. fol. 102. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14. 4.

F18 Zohar in Exod fol. 94. 4.

F19 Ib.

Romans 6:7

For he that is dead, is freed from sin.

This is not to be understood of a natural or a corporeal death; for this is the effect of sin, and is inflicted by way of punishment for it, on Christless persons; so far is it from being an atonement for sin, as the Jews F20 fancy; besides, there are many persons, who as they die in their sins, they will rise in them; though a natural death is alluded to, when persons are free from those laws and obligations to service and duty they are under whilst living: but here it is to be understood of a spiritual or mystical death, and of persons who are dead to the law, by the body of Christ; dead to sin by the sacrifice and grace of Christ; who are baptized into the death of Christ, and in imitation of him: such are “freed from sin”; not from the being of it; nor from the burden of it; nor from a continual war with it; nor from slips and falls into it; no, not even freed from it, in the most solemn services and acts of religion; but they are freed from the dominion of it, from servitude to it, and also from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment on account of it: they are, as it is in the Greek text, and as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, “justified from sin”.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 (See Gill on Romans 5:11).

Romans 6:8

Now if we be dead with Christ

This does not imply any doubt about it, but is rather a taking it for granted: seeing we are dead with Christ by union with him, as our head and representative, and by communion with him in the benefits of his death, and being planted together in the likeness of it; or being dead to the law, sin, and the world, through the virtue and efficacy of Christ’s death:

we believe that we shall also live with him;

not only a life of justification by faith in his righteousness; and a life of sanctification from him, and to his glory; the continuance of which, and a perseverance in it, are firmly believed; but a life of glory and happiness with him hereafter, both in the new Jerusalem, in the new heavens, and new earth, in the glorious state of the church on earth, and in heaven to all eternity; where they shall be personally and visibly with him, in soul and body, and shall live in the most intimate and uninterrupted communion with him, enjoying the highest pleasure, and the most consummate happiness; and are therefore under the greatest obligation, whilst here on earth, to live, not in sin, but to righteousness, and to his praise and glory; with whom they are now dead to sin, and with whom they not only hope, but believe they shall live throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Romans 6:9

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead

That Christ is risen from the dead, is a certain fact, well attested, thoroughly known, and firmly believed; the prophets prophesied of it, Christ himself foretold it, angels affirmed it, and the apostles were witnesses of it, as is also the Holy Ghost: and it is as certain, that he

dieth no more;

he is raised to an immortal life, and will live for evermore; there is no need of his dying again, his death having been a full atonement and expiation of all the sins and transgressions of his people:

death hath no more dominion over him:

it once had dominion over him; it held him under its power for a time, according to the divine determination, and by his own consent: but it was not possible he should be holden of it longer; both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, as the surety of his people, having put away sin for ever by it. He is the holy man the

Jews F21 speak of,

“who is the mystery of the name Jehovah, and in him there is no sin, neither shall death have the dominion over him.”

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Tikkune Zohar, fol. 112. p. 1. apud Rittangel. de verit. Relig. Christ. p. 68.

Romans 6:10

For in that he died

The death of Christ was settled and agreed to in the covenant and council of peace; it was spoken of by the prophets, and typified by sacrifices; Christ came into the world in order to die, and actually did die the death of the cross; in which the great love of God and Christ is expressed to us; and which is a fundamental article of the Christian faith: and when he died,

he died unto sin once:

he died to that, which we by nature are dead in, and could never make atonement for; which he himself never lived in, and which men naturally love to in; and which had he not died for, we must have died for to all eternity; and he died not for any sin of his own, or of angels, nor for the sins of every man, but for the sins of his people; it may be rendered, he died in sin: in the likeness of sinful flesh, in which he was sent; having as a surety sin laid on him, and bore by him, and for which he was wounded, bruised, and died: or rather to sin; that is, to make atonement for it, procure the pardon of it, take it away, and utterly abolish it: and this he did “once”; this is observed, in reference to the repeated sacrifices of the old law, which could never expiate or remove sin; and to show, that Christ’s dying once was enough, his sacrifice was fully satisfactory to the law and justice of God:

but in that he liveth:

which must be understood, not of his life as God, but as man; and that not on earth, but in heaven; where he lives with God, at the right hand of God, and by him, by the power of God: and

he liveth unto God;

to his glory, and to make intercession for us.

Romans 6:11

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves

Two things the apostle would have believers consider of themselves, and reckon themselves, to be, in

consequence of their relation to Christ, who was dead, but is alive, and as agreeable thereunto: the one is, that they would look upon themselves

to be dead indeed unto sin:

believe their discharge from it, and not fear condemnation and death on account of it; and that it shall not be imputed to them, or have any damning power over them, since Christ has died unto it, or for it; and therefore should have no fellowship with it, nothing to do with it, as being dead unto it, and that to them: the other is, that they would consider themselves

alive unto God, through, Jesus Christ our Lord;

and that either in a legal sense, as justified persons; men in a state of nature, or of “Pharisaism”, think themselves alive, when they are not; but when they come under a work of the Spirit of God, they see themselves otherwise, and are convinced both of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify from it; and when they have the righteousness of Christ revealed unto them, and faith is wrought in them to look unto it, and lay hold upon it, they are in themselves, and in their own apprehensions, alive, and that “unto God”, in the sight of God; and their life of faith on the righteousness of Christ, is unto the glory of God, and will be followed with an eternal life with God, to which the justifying righteousness of Christ gives them a title; and this is all through Christ, and his righteousness: or this is to be considered by them of themselves as sanctified persons, who are quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and can feel the burden of sin, see the corruption of their nature, hear the voice both of law and Gospel, breathe after spiritual things, speak the language of Canaan, walk by faith on Christ, and work and act for him; which life of faith and holiness is “unto God”, to his glory and honour, and is “through Christ”, and is maintained and supported by him: or they should consider themselves not only as being justified before God, and made alive by his Spirit, but as such who shall live to and with God, through Christ, for evermore; for as Christ died and rose again, and lives unto and with God for ever, so they being dead to sin through him, and being quickened together with him and by his Spirit, shall never die the second death, but shall have everlasting life.

Romans 6:12

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body

Since grace reigns in you, sin should not: seeing ye are dead to sin, are baptized into the death of Christ, and are dead with him, and alive through him, sin therefore should not reign in you, and over you. This exhortation does not suppose a freewill power in man naturally, for this is spoken to persons, who had the Spirit and grace of Christ, and in whom God had wrought both to will and to do of his good pleasure; nor is this exhortation unnecessary to believers, though they are dead to sin, and though God has promised it shall not have the dominion over them, and though reigning sin, as divines say, cannot be in regenerate persons; for though they are entirely dead to sin as justified persons, yet not perfectly so as sanctified: they are indeed dead to sin, but sin is not dead in them; it struggles, it makes war, leads captive, and threatens absolute and universal dominion, wherefore such an exhortation is necessary; besides, though God has promised that sin shall not have the dominion, yet making use of means, such as prayer to God that it may not, striving against it, opposing it, in order to hinder its dominion, are no ways inconsistent with the promise of God, whose promises often have their accomplishment in the use of means: moreover, whereas some divines say, that reigning sin may be and others that it cannot be in regenerate persons, it should be observed, that if by reigning sin is meant, sinning against God out of malice and contempt, with the whole heart, without any struggle against it, or repentance for it, or so as to lose the grace of God, and never rise more, then it must be said that it cannot be in a regenerate man; but if by it is meant, falling into sin against their consciences, knowingly and willingly, so as to distress their minds, lose their peace, and grieve the Spirit of God, so as to be held under it, and be led captive by it, such power sin may have in them, and over them; and therefore the exhortation is not needless; and when the apostle says, let it not reign “in your mortal body”, by it is either meant the whole man, or rather the body only, which is the instrument of sinning, and is become mortal through sin; and being so, is a reason why it should not reign in it, since it has done so much mischief to it already: and this also denotes the time of sin’s being in us, and of the danger of its reigning in us; it is only whilst we are in this mortal body; and the consideration of our mortality should quicken us to war against sin, and be careful not to

obey it in the lusts thereof;

the lusts of the body, or flesh, which are therefore

sometimes called fleshly lusts, are many, and have great power and influence; and may be said to be obeyed, when provision is made to fulfil them, when these are the business of a man’s life, and the whole of his conversation is taken up in them, without struggle against them, or opposition to them; and herein lies the reign of sin.

Romans 6:13

Neither yield ye your members

The apostle more fully explains what he means by obeying sin in the lusts thereof; a presenting, or making use of the “members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin”: by their “members” he means the several powers and faculties of the soul, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “your souls”; or the several parts of the body, or both; by “yielding”, or presenting of them, is designed the employment of them in the service of sin,

as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:

that is, as means of performing unrighteous actions, in obedience to sin, or the corruption of nature with its lusts: the word translated “instruments”, signifies “arms” or “weapons”: so the ancients F23 formerly reckoned weapons the members of soldiers; and here the apostle calls the members weapons, which he would not have the saints use in favour of sin, an enemy and a tyrant; for that would be unrighteous in itself, and injurious to God and themselves: says he,

but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead:

that is, present themselves soul and body to God, give up and devote themselves to him, and to his service, and yield a cheerful obedience to him; considering themselves as under great obligation so to do, inasmuch as they are freed from condemnation and death, by the righteousness of Christ; and quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, by his Spirit and grace; and therefore should yield

your members,
their whole selves,

as instruments,
or weapons

of righteousness unto God;

by fighting against sin, revenging all disobedience, and fulfilling obedience to the commands of God: the

same is here meant, as is by putting on “the armour of light” (Romans 13:12), and wearing and making use of “the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and the left”, (2 Corinthians 6:7).

FOOTNOTES:

F23 Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 12. p. 18.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you

It has dominion over God’s people in a state of unregeneracy: and after conversion it is still in them, and has great power oftentimes to hinder that which is good, and to effect that which is evil; it entices and ensnares, and brings into captivity, and seems as though it would regain its dominion, and reign again, but it shall not. This is not a precept, exhortation, or admonition, as before, though some read it as such, “let not sin have dominion over you”; nor does it express merely what ought not to be, but what cannot, and shall not be; it is an absolute promise, that sin shall not have the dominion over believers; and respects not acts of sin, but the principle of sin; and means not its damning power, though that is took away, but its tyrannical, governing power: “it shall not lord it over you”, as the words may be rendered; for in regeneration, sin is dethroned; Christ enters as Lord, and continues to be so; saints are in another kingdom, the kingdom of Christ and grace; could sin reign again over them, they might be lost and perish, which they never can: now this is a noble argument why saints should use their members as weapons of righteousness for God and against sin; since they are sure of being conquerors, and are secure from the tyrannical government of sin over them. The Jewish doctors say F24, there are three persons, *יהוה* (יהוה), “over whom the evil imagination”, or “sin, had not the dominion”; and these are they, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but these are not the only persons, for all Abraham’s spiritual seed, all that are of the faith of Abraham, enjoy the same favour: the reason of this is,

for ye are not under the law;

by which is meant, not the law of nature; nor the civil law of the Jews; nor their ceremonial law; but either the law of sin, as a governing principle; or rather the moral law: this they were under, so as to obey it, but not in order to obtain righteousness by it; or as forced to obey it by its threats and terrors; they were not under its rigorous exaction; nor under its curse and

condemnation; nor as irritating sin, and causing it to abound; or as a covenant of works:

but under grace;

under the covenant of grace, and in the enjoyment of the blessings of it; under the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which leads and teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; under and in the possession of the grace of justification and pardon, which strongly influence to righteousness and holiness; and under regenerating and sanctifying grace as a reigning governing principle in the soul. The apostle’s view in this is, to affect the saints with their present privilege, and to engage them in a cheerful conflict with sin, and to stir up in them an abhorrence of living in it.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 17. 1.

Romans 6:15

What then? shall we sin

Does it follow from hence, that therefore we may sin, and go on and continue in it,

because we are not under the law, but under grace?

here the apostle meets with an objection of the adversary, saying, that if men are not under the law, and are free from all obligation to it, then they may live as they list; nor can they be chargeable with sin, or that be objected to them; since where there is no law, there is no transgression, and sin is not imputed where there is no law; and if they are under grace, or in the love and favour of God, from which there is no separation, then they cannot be damned, do what they will: but this objection proceeds upon a mistaken sense of the phrase, “under the law”; for believers, though they are not under the law as the ministry of Moses, yet they are under it, as it is in the hands of Christ; and though not under its curse, yet under obligation to obedience to it, from principles of love and grace; and a transgression of it is sin in them, as in others; and which is taken notice of by God, and visited with stripes in a fatherly way, though his loving kindness is not removed: and to argue from the unchangeableness of God’s grace, or the doctrines of it, as encouraging licentiousness, is greatly to abuse the grace of God, and manifestly betrays such persons to be ignorant of it and its influence; since nothing more powerfully engages to a love of holiness, and hatred of sin; wherefore the apostle, answers to this objection in his usual way,

God forbid;

signifying his abhorrence of everything of this kind.

Romans 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves

The apostle goes on with his answer to the above objection, by making use of an argument from the nature of servants and their obedience, a thing well known to everyone, and which none could be ignorant of; which he delivers by way of distribution, that such who yield themselves

servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of

sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness:

such who obey sin, are the servants of sin; they are at the beck and command of sin; they give up themselves to the service of it with delight and diligence, and are perfect drudges to it: this is a very unhappy situation; their service is very unreasonable; and they are rendered incapable of serving God, for no man can serve two masters; they are hereby brought into the drudgery of the devil; into a state of bondage, out of which nothing but grace can extricate them; into a very mean and contemptible condition, and even a deplorable one; for if grace prevent not, they will have the wages of sin paid them, which is death, for their obedience is “of sin unto death”; which will lie in an eternal separation from Father, Son, and Spirit, in a sense of divine wrath, and in the company of devils and damned spirits: now this is added, to show the malignant nature and just demerit of sin, and to deter and dissuade persons from the service of it: on the other hand, such as obey the Lord, are the servants “of obedience unto righteousness”: but why is not this obedience, which is the obedience of faith to the Gospel, of Christ, and of the new man to God or Christ, said to be “unto life”, as the antithesis seems to require? because though death is the fruit of sin, yet life is not the fruit of obedience, but the fruit of obedience is righteousness; by which is meant, nor a justifying one before God, but righteousness before men; or a course of living soberly and righteously, which is the effect of being under grace; and hence it appears, that true believers can make no such ill use of their privilege, as is suggested in the objection.

Romans 6:17

But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin

Not that the apostle must be thought to give thanks to God for that these persons had been the servants of sin, than which nothing is more disagreeable to God, or caused more shame to themselves; but that inasmuch as they had been in the drudgery and service of sin, they were now freed from it. Just as if a person, that has been a slave for some time in Algiers, should bless God, or be thankful to the instrument of his deliverance, that whereas he had been in such slavery, he is now redeemed from it: wherefore it is added,

but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was

delivered you.

By “the form of doctrine”, is meant the Gospel, which is the “doctrine” of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, and is sound and according to godliness; and is a “form”, or contains a summary and compendium of truths, and is a pattern or exemplar, according to which ministers are to preach, and people to hear and receive. So the word (נוף) which is the same with שפה here, is used by the Jewish F25 writers for a form, copy, pattern, or exemplar of any sort of writings This form of doctrine is (קבלה) , “a Cabala”, but not like that of the Jews’ oral law, or form of traditions F26, handed down, as they say, from one man, and set of men, to another; but this is delivered from the Father to Christ, from Christ to his apostles, and by them to the saints; and “into which they were delivered”, as it may be rendered, as into a mould; and so received the impression of it, and were evangelized by it: so such are who have a spirit of Gospel liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ, and not by the works of the law; who derive their comfort from him, and not from anything done by them; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the grace of God, and who are zealous of good works, without any dependence on them. This form of doctrine was “obeyed” by them; by which is meant, not a mere obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel; nor a bare hearing of the doctrines of it, and giving an assent unto them; but an embracing of them by faith for themselves, so as to lay hold on Christ in them, submit to his righteousness therein revealed, and be willing to be saved by him, and him alone, in his own way; and this is the obedience of faith: the reason why faith is expressed by obedience is, because faith receives truth upon the veracity of God, and not upon the dictates of carnal reason; and is always more or less attended with external obedience to the will of

God; and that is rightly performed only by faith. And this obedience did not lie in words, or proceed on mercenary views, and in an hypocritical way; but was “from the heart”; and was real and sincere: and good reason there is why a hearty, cheerful, and voluntary obedience should be yielded to the Gospel; since it is from God; Christ is the substance of it; it is truth, and the word of our salvation. The Alexandrian copy reads, “from a pure heart”; and the Arabic version, “from the sincerity of your heart”; and the Ethiopic version, “with your whole heart”.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 26. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 44. 2. R. Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Tora, precept. Affirm. 50. F26 Vid. Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Romans 6:18

Being then made free from sin

Not from a sinful nature; nor from a corrupt heart; nor from vain thoughts; nor from sinful words; nor from sinful actions altogether; but from the damning power of sin: sin brought all men under a sentence of condemnation; Christ has bore the execution of this sentence in himself for his people; hence, as considered in him, they are free from it; and such as are born again have passed from death to life, and shall never enter into condemnation: likewise, such persons are free from the guilt of sin; men are in a legal sense arraigned for sin, accused of it, and being convicted, are pronounced guilty before God; and awakened souls have a sense of it in themselves; but the blood of Christ sprinkled on their consciences frees them from it; though fresh sins committed bring fresh guilt, which requires the continual application of the blood of Jesus for pardon and cleansing; but what is chiefly designed here is freedom from the servitude of sin, as appears from the context. Now God’s elect are not released voluntarily by their former masters; nor is their freedom obtained by their own power and will; but it is of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Gospel is generally the means of it, and happy are those persons who are blessed with it! They are rid of a bad master; are freed from the worst of bondage; will be no more servants, as before; are delivered from the power, and out of the kingdom of darkness; are heirs of heaven, and shall enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God: and for the time present are

become the servants of righteousness;

servants to God, whose Gospel they obey; servants to Christ, whose righteousness they submit to; and servants to the law of righteousness, as held forth by Christ; they give up themselves to a course and life of righteousness, in which there are true honour, peace, and pleasure.

Romans 6:19

I speak after the manner of men

This refers either to what the apostle had said already concerning service and liberty, things which were known among men, and easy to be understood; or to the following exhortation: what he was about to say, he delivered in a manner suited to their understandings, and was (anyrwpinon) , “that which was human”; not angelic, or what required the power, purity, and perfection of angels; or what was unreasonable or impossible, but what was their reasonable service, as men; and might be done through the grace of God, in the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of the Spirit: and though he might have insisted upon it with good reason, that they ought to be more diligent and industrious in the service of God than they had been in the service of sin; yet

because of the infirmity of their flesh,

considering that they had flesh, or corrupt nature, and were attended with weakness in knowledge, faith, and obedience; he only pressed this upon them, that in like manner as they had been servants to sin, they would be servants to righteousness:

for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to

iniquity unto iniquity;

what they yielded to the service of sin were their “members”; by which, as before, may be meant, either the powers and faculties of their souls, or the parts and members of their bodies, or both; and particularly the latter, as the eyes and ears, the tongue, the mouth, the hands, and feet, which are all employed by a natural man in the drudgery of sin: these are yielded to sin under the form and character of “servants”; and as such are governed, directed, and ordered to fulfil this and the other lust, which is done willingly and readily: these members are “yielded”, presented, and given up cheerfully to this slavery; which is both scandalous and unrighteous: it is “to uncleanness”; which designs all sorts of pollution and filthiness, both of flesh and

spirit: “and to iniquity”; everything that is contrary to the law, all unrighteousness and ungodliness; and it is added, “unto iniquity”; which may design all sorts of sin, a progress in it, adding continually to it; which shows them to have been thorough hearty servants of sin. Now what the apostle exhorts to, and requires of them, is, that

even so now they would yield their members servants to righteousness

unto holiness;

that is, let the same members that have been employed in the service of sin, be made use of in the service of righteousness: let your eyes be employed in looking and diligently searching into the Scriptures of truth; your ears in hearing the Gospel preached; your lips, mouth, and tongue, in expressing the praises of God, for what he has done for you; your hands in distributing to the interest of religion, and the necessities of the saints; and your feet in hastening to attend on public worship, and observe the testimonies of the Lord: let them be employed under the same form and character as servants, waiting upon the Lord, ready to fulfil his will; and in the same manner, freely, willingly, and cheerfully, and that constantly and universally, in all acts of righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:20

For when ye were the servants of sin

This is an argument used, or a reason given, why regenerate persons should be diligent in the service of righteousness; because when they were employed in the drudgery of sin, they

were free from righteousness;

they had no righteousness, nor were they desirous of any; yea, averse to it, threw off the yoke of the law of righteousness, and lived in a very unrighteous manner: hence may be observed what is the free will of man in an unregenerate state; not free to, but “from” righteousness; free enough to evil, but from all that is good; and also what obligation lies upon believers, who are delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the servitude of sin, to a life and service of righteousness; inasmuch as they were before free from it, and unconcerned about it, but are now made by the grace of God free to it, they ought therefore cheerfully to pursue it, and neglect no opportunity of performing it.

Romans 6:21

What fruit had ye then in those things?

&c.] That is, what profit, pleasure, satisfaction, or comfort, had ye in the commission of sin? Sin yields no real profit to the servants of it. If a man, by sinful practices, could amass together the riches of the Indies, or gain the whole world, yet if his soul is lost thereby, what advantage would it be to him? he would be infinitely the loser by it; nor would all his wealth and riches profit him in the day of God’s wrath and righteous judgment: nor is there any true pleasure in sin; persons may imagine within themselves they enjoy a real pleasure whilst they are serving divers lusts; but this is but imaginary, it is not real; and this imaginary pleasure is but for a season; it issues in bitterness and death: nor is there any satisfaction in it; when men have endeavoured to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites in every way that can be devised, they still remain as they were; nor can they reflect with real satisfaction, and without some slinging remorse, upon the methods they have pursued to gain it: nor is there any true honour in sin, nothing but what is scandalous and disgraceful to human nature; shame, sooner or later, is the fruit of sin:

whereof ye are now ashamed;

some men may be indeed for the present so hardened as not to blush and be ashamed at the commission of the vilest sins; such are they who have no sense of sin, have no fear of God, or regard to men; and so sin openly, and without any guise, glory in it, and make their boast of it: but when persons are wrought upon by the Spirit of God, they are ashamed of sin; which might be exemplified in the case of Adam and Eve, of Ephraim, of the prodigal son, and of the poor publican; the reason is, because light is struck into their hearts; and this makes manifest the odious and detestable nature of sin; sin is hereby seen in its own proper colours, as exceeding sinful, loathsome, and abominable: besides, the grace and goodness of God are discovered in the forgiveness of it; and the glory of God’s purity and holiness, and the beauty and loveliness of Christ, are discerned by such persons; all which have a tendency to make them ashamed of sin, out of love with it, and to abhor it: and a good thing it is to be brought to be ashamed of sin here; for such who are not ashamed of it here, shall be brought to everlasting shame and confusion hereafter. Nay, this is not all; not only shame will be the fruit of sin, but it will also issue in death:

for the, end of those things is death:

the profit, the reward, and wages of them is death: sin not only brings a spiritual or moral death on persons, on all the powers and faculties of their souls, and is followed with a corporeal death; but if grace prevent not, it will end in an eternal one; for however right and good the ways of sin may seem to the carnal mind, “the end thereof are the ways of death” ((Proverbs 14:12) (16:25)).

Romans 6:22

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God,

&c.] In what sense regenerate persons are free from sin, and are become the servants of God, has been observed already; the consequence of which is, that such have their

fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life:

holiness is a fruit of freedom from the bondage of sin, and of serving God; holiness begun in regeneration, calling, and conversion, is a fruit of the Spirit; a course of living righteously is a fruit of holiness, as a principle implanted; a gradual increase in holiness is carried on by the Spirit of God in a course of righteousness; and a course of righteousness, from a principle of grace, issues in perfect holiness; “without which no man shall see the Lord” ((Hebrews 12:14)): here it seems to design, that holiness is fruit, or that which is gain and profit to persons, in opposition to sin, in which there is no profit: it is not indeed profitable to God in point of merit; yet holiness, as a principle of grace, is profitable to the saints in point of meetness for glory; and holiness, as it denotes an external course of life, is useful and profitable on many accounts; hereby God is glorified, the doctrine of Christ is adorned, religion is honoured and recommended, our own credit, reputation, and peace, are preserved, and our neighbour’s good promoted.

And the end is everlasting life:

as sin issues, if grace prevent not, in everlasting death; holiness issues in eternal life, not by way of merit, but of free gift.

INTRODUCTION ROMANS 7

The Apostle, in this chapter, discourses concerning the freedom of justified and regenerated persons from the law, and concerning the nature, use, and excellency of it; in which he removes several objections to it, and gives an account from his own experience of the struggle and combat there is between flesh and spirit

in a regenerate person; and which shows, that though believers are justified from sin, yet still sin remains in them, and is the complaint of their souls. Whereas he had in Ro 6:14 , of the preceding chapter, asserted that believers are not under the law, but under grace: he knew that this would be matter of offence to the believing Jews, who still retained an high opinion of the law; wherefore he takes it up in the beginning of this chapter, and explains his meaning, and shows in what sense justified ones are delivered from it; and first observes a known maxim, which everyone, especially such as know anything of the nature of laws, must allow of; that the law has power over a man as long as he lives, and no longer, Ro 7:1 , and then particularly instances in the law of marriage, Ro 7:2 , which is in force as long as both parties live and no longer: during the husband’s life the wife is bound, but when dead she is loosed, and which is further explained, Ro 7:3 , that should she marry another while her husband is alive, she would be an adulteress; but he being dead, should she marry, she is liable to no such imputation: this the apostle accommodates, Ro 7:4 , to the case of the law, and the saints’ deliverance from it, in which he asserts that they are dead to the law, and that to them, as in Ro 7:6 , by the body of Christ; and therefore the law could have no dominion over them, as is the case of all laws when men are dead; and so they might be lawfully married to another, to bring forth fruit to God, according to the particular law of marriage. This is illustrated by the different state and condition of God’s elect, before and after conversion; whilst in an unconverted state the law irritates indwelling sin, and the lusts of it, and by the members of the body operates to the bringing forth the deadly fruit of sin, Ro 7:5 , but when delivered from the irritating power of the law, that being dead in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ, they are both in a capacity, and under an obligation to serve the Lord, in a new and spiritual manner, Ro 7:6 , and whereas he had said that the motions of sin are stirred up by the law, Ro 7:5 , he saw that an objection might be raised against the law, as if that was sinful; this he removes by expressing his abhorrence of such a thought, by pointing out the law as that which makes known sin, and by the experience he himself had of it, making known indwelling sin to him, Ro 7:7 , when he goes on to give an account of the workings of corrupt nature in him, under the prohibition of the law; how it was with him before it entered into his conscience, and how it was with him afterwards; that before he

thought himself alive, and in a fair way to eternal life; but afterwards, as sin appeared to him more vigorous than ever, he found himself a dead man, and dead to all hope of life by the law, being killed by it, or rather by sin which worked by it, Ro 7:8-11, and therefore he vindicates the law as holy, just, and good, Ro 7:12, and answers an objection that might be formed from what he had said concerning the effect the law had upon him, as if it was made death unto him; whereas the office it did was to show him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which, and not the law, was the cause of death, Ro 7:13, for to it with other saints he bears this testimony, that it is spiritual, though in comparison of it he was carnal and sold under sin, Ro 7:14, and from henceforward to the end of the chapter, he gives an account of the force and power of indwelling sin in him, and the conflict there was in him between grace and corruption: he had knowledge of that which is good, approved of it, and yet did it not, hated sin and yet committed it, Ro 7:15, but however, his desire after that which was good, and his approbation of it, showed that he agreed to this, that the law was good, Ro 7:16, nor was his commission of sin to be imputed to his renewed self, but to indwelling corruption, Ro 7:17, the fleshly part in him, in which was no good thing, Ro 7:18, he found he had a will to that which is good, but not power to perform it; which was abundantly evident by his practice, seeing what he would he did not, and what he would not he did. Ro 7:19, from whence he concludes again, Ro 7:20, as in Ro 7:17, that the evil he did was to be reckoned not to his spiritual, or renewed self, but to his corrupt nature; which he found, as a law that had power to command and to cause to obey, always at hand, close by him when he was desirous of doing good, Ro 7:21, and yet amidst all these workings of sin in him, he found a real delight and pleasure in the holy law of God, as he was renewed in the spirit of his mind, Ro 7:22, upon the whole he perceived there were two contrary principles in him, which militated one against the other, and sometimes so it was, that through the strength of corrupt nature in him, he was made a captive to the law of sin and death, Ro 7:23, which fetched from him a doleful lamentation and complaint, as if his case was desperate, and there was no deliverance for him, Ro 7:24, and yet upon a view of his great Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus Christ, he takes heart, and thanks God that there was, and would be a deliverance for him through Christ, Ro 7:25, and then closes the account which stood thus in his experience, and does in the experience of every regenerate man;

that with his renewed mind he served the holy law of God from a principle of grace, and with his fleshly and carnal part the law of sin.

ROMANS CHAPTER 7

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would,

that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

COMMENTARY CHAPTER 7

Romans 7:1

Know ye not, brethren

The apostle having asserted, (Romans 6:14) , that the believing Romans were “not under the law”; which he knew would be displeasing to many, and excepted to by them, especially the Jews that were among them, who though they believed in Christ, yet were zealous of the law, takes it up again, and explains and defends it. That they were the Jewish converts at Rome he here particularly addresses, appears partly from his calling them “brethren”, for they were so according to the flesh, as well as in a spiritual relation, and this he rather mentions to soften their resentments, and conciliate their minds to him; and partly from the words included in a parenthesis,

for I speak to them that know the law;

not the law of nature, but the law of Moses, as the Jews did, being trained up in the knowledge of it; to these he appeals, saying, “know ye not”, for the truth of a principle or maxim he afterwards improves, which they could not be ignorant of,

how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he, or “it”,

liveth;

for the word “liveth” may refer either to man or to the law. The law may be said to live, when it is in full force, and to be dead, when it is abrogated and disannulled; now whilst it lives, or is in force, it has dominion over a man; it can require and command obedience of him, and in case of disobedience can condemn him, and inflict punishment on him: and this power it has also as long as the man lives who is under it, but when he is dead it has no more dominion over him; then “the servant is free from his master”, (Job 3:19) ; that is, from the law of his master; and children are free from the law of their parents, the wife from the law of her husband, and subjects from the law of their prince. This is so clear a point that none can doubt of it. The Jews have a saying F4, that

``when a man is dead, he becomes (twumh Nmwh hrwt Nm yvpx) , free from the law, and from the commands.”

FOOTNOTES:

F4 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 1. Niddah, fol. 61. 2. & T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 1.

Romans 7:2

For the woman which hath an husband

The former general rule is here illustrated by a particular instance and example in the law of marriage; a woman that is married to a man,

is bound by the law to her husband;

to live with him, in subjection and obedience to him,

so long as he liveth;

except in the cases of adultery, (Matthew 19:9) , and desertion, (1 Corinthians 7:15) , by which the bond of marriage is loosed, and for which a divorce or separation may be made, which are equal to death:

but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband;

the bond of marriage is dissolved, the law of it is abolished, and she is at entire liberty to marry whom she will, (1 Corinthians 7:39) .

Romans 7:3

So then if while her husband liveth

True indeed it is, that whilst her husband is alive, if

she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress;

she will be noted and accounted of as such everybody, except in the above mentioned cases:

but if her husband be dead;

then there can be no exception to her marriage:

she is free from the law;

of marriage, by which she was before bound:

so that she is no adulteress;

nor will any reckon her such; she is clear from any such imputation:

though she be married to another man;

hence it appears that second marriages are lawful.

Romans 7:4**Wherefore, my brethren, ye also**

Here the apostle accommodates the foregoing instance and example to the case in hand, showing, that the saints were not under the law, the power and dominion of it; since that, as when a man is dead, the woman is loosed from that law by which she was bound whilst he lived, that she may lawfully marry another man, and bear children to him without the imputation of adultery; so believers being dead to the law, and the law dead to them, which is all one, they are loosed from it, and may be, and are lawfully married to Christ, that they may bring forth the genuine fruits of good works, not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them, but for the honour and glory of God; in which account may be observed, an assertion that the saints and children of God

are become dead to the law,

and that to them, as in (Romans 7:6), and can have no more power over them than a law can have over dead persons, or a dead abrogated law can have over living ones. They are represented as “dead to sin”, and “dead with Christ”, (Romans 6:2 Romans 6:8); and here, “dead to the law”, as in (Galatians 2:19), and consequently cannot be under it; are out of the reach of its power and government, since that only has dominion over a man as long as he lives the law is dead to them; it has no power over them, to threaten and terrify them into obedience to it; nor even rigorously to exact it, or command it in a

compulsory way; nor is there any need of all this, since believers delight in it after the inward man, and serve it with their minds freely and willingly; the love of Christ, and not the terrors of the law, constrains them to yield a cheerful obedience to it; it has no power to charge and accuse them, curse or condemn them, or minister death unto them, no, not a corporeal one, as a penal evil, and much less an eternal one. And the way and means by which they become dead to the law, and that to them is,

by the body of Christ;

not by Christ, as the body or substance of the ceremonial law; see (Colossians 2:17); since that is not singly designed, but the whole law of Moses; but by “the body of Christ”, is either meant Christ himself, (Hebrews 10:10) (9:14), or rather the human nature of Christ, (Hebrews 10:5), in which the law meets with every thing it can require and demand, as holiness of nature, which is the saints’ sanctification in Christ; obedience of life, which is their righteousness; and sufferings of death, which is the penalty the law enjoins, whereby full expiation of sin is made, complete pardon is procured, and eternal redemption obtained; so that the law has nothing more to demand; its mouth is stopped, it is not in its power to curse and damn believers, they are dead to that, and that to them: the reason why the law is become so to them, and they to that, is,

that ye should be married to another;

or “that ye should be to another”, or “be another’s”; that is, that ye should appear to be so in a just and legal way; for they were another’s, they were Christ’s before by the Father’s gift, and were secretly married to him in the everlasting covenant, before he assumed their nature, and in the body of his flesh bore their sins, satisfied law and justice, paid their debts, and so freed them from the power of the law, its curse and condemnation, or any obligation to punishment; all which was done in consequence of his interest in them, and their marriage relation to him; but here respect is had to their open marriage to him in time, the day of their espousals in conversion; to make way for which, the law, their former husband, must be dead, and they dead to that, that so their marriage to Christ might appear lawful and justifiable; who is very fitly described by him,

who is raised from the dead;

and is a living husband, and will ever continue so, will never die more; and therefore as the saints can never be loosed from the marriage bond of union between

Christ and them, so they can never be loosed from the law of this husband; wherefore though they are dead to the law as a covenant of works, and as ministered by Moses, and are free from any obligation to it, as so considered, yet they are “under the law to Christ”, (1 Corinthians 9:21); under obligation, by the ties of love, to obedience to it, and shall never be loosed from it. The end of being dead to the law, and of being married to Christ, is,

that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

The allusion is to children being called “the fruit of the womb”, (Psalms 127:3) (Luke 1:42), and here designs good works, the fruits of righteousness, which are brought forth by persons espoused to Christ, under the influence of the Spirit and grace of God; and they are “unto God”, that is, for the honour and glory of God; meaning either Christ the husband of believers, who is God over all blessed for ever; or God the Father, to whose praise and glory they are by Christ; and which is a reason and argument which strongly excites and encourages the saints to the performance of them: and let it be observed, that as children begotten and born in lawful marriage are only true and legitimate, and all before marriage are spurious and illegitimate; so such works only are the true and genuine fruits of righteousness, which are in consequence of a marriage relation to Christ; are done in faith, spring from love, and are directed to the glory of God; and all others, which are done before marriage to Christ, and without faith in him, are like spurious and illegitimate children

Romans 7:5**For when we were in the flesh**

This respects not their being under the legal dispensation, the Mosaic economy; which lay greatly in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, such as regarded the flesh chiefly; so their meats and drinks concerned the body; their ablutions and washings sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; their circumcision was outward in the flesh; the several rituals of the law consisted in outward things, though typical of internal and spiritual ones; hence those that trusted in them trusted in the flesh: but to be “in the flesh” stands opposed, (Romans 7:8 Romans 7:9); to a being “in the spirit”; whereas there were many under that legal and carnal dispensation who were in the spirit, and had the Spirit of God, as David and others; besides, the apostle must be thought to use the phrase in such a

sense, as to include all the persons he is speaking of and writing to, who were both Jews and Gentiles, for of such the church at Rome consisted; and the sense is this, “for when we”, Jews and Gentiles, who are now believers in Christ, “were” formerly, before our conversion to, and faith in Christ, “in the flesh”, that is, in a corrupt, carnal, and unregenerate state and condition; in which sense the word “flesh” is frequently used in the next chapter: now not all such who have flesh, sin, or corrupt nature in them, must be reckoned to be in the flesh, for there is a difference between flesh being in persons, from which none are free in this life, and their being in the flesh; nor all such who commit sin, or do carnal things at times, for there is not a just man that doth good and sinneth not; but such who are as they were born, without any alteration made in them by the Spirit and grace of God; who have nothing but flesh in them, no fear of God, nor love to and faith in Christ, nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; no true sight and sense of sin, nor any spiritual knowledge of salvation by Christ; in whom flesh is the governing principle, whose minds and principles are carnal, and their conversation wholly so; yea, persons may be in the flesh, in an unregenerate state, who may abstain from the grosser immoralities of life, and even make a profession of religion: now such these had been the apostle is speaking of and to, and tells how it was with them when in this state;

the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members

to bring forth fruit unto death:

by “the motions of sin” are meant, the evil passions and affections of the mind, the lusts of the heart, sinful desires, evil thoughts, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, the first motions of the mind to sin: these “were by the law”; not as the efficient cause of them, that neither produces nor encourages them; it is holy, just, and good, requires truth in the inward parts, and not only forbids the outward acts of sin, but even covetous desires, and lustful thoughts: no, these inward motions of sin arise from a corrupt heart and nature; are encouraged and cherished by the old man that dwells there; and men are enticed by Satan to a compliance with them. Some think that the meaning of the phrase is, that these secret lusts of the heart are made known by the law, as in (Romans 7:7), so they are, but not whilst a man is in the flesh, or in an unregenerate state, but when he comes to be wrought upon powerfully by

the Spirit of God, who makes use of the law to such a purpose: but the true sense of it is, that these motions of sin are irritated, provoked, and increased, through the law's prohibition of them; which is not to be charged as a fault on the law, but to be imputed to the depravity and corruption of man; who is like to one in a burning fever, very desirous of drink, who the more it is forbid, the more eager is he of it; or like a mighty torrent of water, which rises, rages, flows, and overflows, the more any methods are taken to stop its current; or like a filthy dunghill, which when the sun strikes powerfully on it, it exhales and draws out its filthy stench; which nauseous smell is not to be imputed to the pure rays of the sun, but to the filthiness of the dunghill: these motions of sin are said to "work in our members"; in the members of our bodies, which these sinful affections of the soul make use of to put them into action, and so they bring forth fruit; very evil fruit indeed, for nothing else can be expected from such an evil tree as the corrupt nature of man is: and this fruit is "unto death": deadly fruit, worthy of death, and would issue in eternal death, if grace did not prevent: the rise, beginning, motion, progress, and issue of sin, are most exactly and beautifully described, agreeably to this account here, by the Apostle James, (James 1:13-15).

Romans 7:6

But now we are delivered from the law

From the ministration of it, by Moses; from it, as a covenant of works; from its rigorous exaction; from its curse and condemnation, all this by Christ; and from its being an irritating, provoking law to sin, through the corruption of nature, by the Spirit and grace of Christ; but not from obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies read, "from the law of death"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "we are loosed from the law, and are delivered from the former doctrine"; the doctrine of the legal dispensation.

That being dead;

not sin, but the law: in what sense believers are dead to the law, and that to them, (See Gill on Romans 7:4).

Wherein we were held:

as a woman is by the law to her husband, or as persons guilty, who are detained prisoners; so we were "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith", as in a prison, (Galatians 3:23); Now the saints deliverance from the law through the abrogation of it, that losing

its former life, vigour, power, and dominion, is not that they may live a loose licentious life and conversation, but that they

should serve

the Lord their God without slavish fear, and with a godly one, acceptably, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of their lives; and their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, lawgiver in his church, and whose commandments are to be observed from a principle of love, in faith, and to his glory; yea, even the law itself, as held forth by him, as the apostle says in the close of this chapter, "with the mind I myself serve the law of God", (Romans 7:25): the manner in which this service is to be, and is performed, is,

in newness of Spirit;

under the influences of the Spirit of God, the author of renovation, of the new creature, or new man created in us, in righteousness and true holiness; and from a new heart, and new Spirit, and new principles of life, light, love, and grace, formed in the soul; and by walking in "newness of life", (Romans 6:4), or by a new life, walk, and conversation:

and not in the oldness of the letter;

not in the outward observance of the law of Moses, which is the "letter"; not indulging the old man, or walking after the dictates of corrupt nature; nor behaving according to the old former course of living: on the whole it may be observed, that a believer without the law, being delivered from it, that being dead to him, and he to that, lives a better life and conversation under the influence of the Spirit of God, than one that is under the law, and the works of it, destitute of the grace of God; the one brings forth "fruit unto death", (Romans 7:5), the other serves the Lord, "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter".

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? is the law sin?

&c.] The apostle having said, that "the motions of sins were by the law", (Romans 7:5), meets with an objection, or rather an ill natured cavil, "is the law sin?" if the motions sins are by it, then it instigates and prompts men to sin; it cherishes it in them; it leads them and impels them to the commission of it, and therefore must be the cause of sin; and if the cause of sin, then it must be sin, or sinful itself: "what shall we say then?" how shall we remove this difficulty, answer

this objection, and silence this cavil? To this it is replied by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid!

a way of speaking often made use of by the apostle, when any dreadful consequence was drawn from, or any shocking objection was made to his doctrine, and which was so monstrous as scarcely to deserve any other manner of refutation; see (Romans 3:3-5) (Romans 6:1 Romans 6:2 Romans 6:15); and next by observing the use of the law to discover sin; which it does by forbidding it, and threatening it with death; by accusing for it, convincing of it, and representing it in its proper colours, it being as a glass in which it may be beheld just as it is, neither greater nor less; which must be understood as attended with a divine power and light, otherwise as a glass is of no use to a blind man, so neither is the law in this sense, to a man in a state of darkness, until the Spirit of God opens his eyes to behold in this glass what manner of man he is: now since the law is so useful to discover, and so to discountenance sin, that itself cannot be sin, or sinful. The apostle exemplifies this in his own case, and says,

nay, I had not known sin, but by the law;

which he says not in the person of another, there is no room nor reason for such a fancy; but in his own person, and of himself: not of himself at that present time, as is evident from his way of speaking; nor of himself in his childhood, before he came to years of discretion to discern between good and evil; but as, and when he was a grown person, and whilst a Pharisee, (Philippians 3:5); he did not know sin during his being in that state till the law came, and entered into his conscience, and then, and by it, he knew sin, (Romans 7:7), the exceeding sinfulness of it, (Romans 7:13), and that he himself was the chief of sinners, (1 Timothy 1:15). Nay he goes on to observe, that by the law he came to know, not only the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts; says he,

for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shall not covet:

as it does in (Exodus 20:17). This is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they produce any passage out of the law, thus F5, (hrma hrwth), "the law says", if anyone comes to kill thee; referring either to (1 Samuel 24:11) or (Exodus 22:1); and a little after, "the law says", namely, in (Exodus 3:5), "put off thy shoes from off thy feet", &c. By "lust" is meant the inward motions of sin in the

heart, any and every desire of the mind after it; not only studied and concerted schemes, how to bring about and compass an evil action; but every loose vagrant thought of sin, and inclination to it; yea, every imagination of the thought of the heart, before the imagination is well formed into a thought; and not only a dallying with sin in the mind, dwelling upon it with pleasure in thought, but even such sudden motions and starts of the mind to sin, to which we give no assent; such as are involuntary, yea, contrary to the will, being "the evil [we] would not", (Romans 7:19), and are displeasing and hateful to us; these are meant by lust, and which by the law of God are known to be sinful, and only by that. These were not known to be so by the Gentiles, who only had the law and light of nature; nor are they condemned, nor any provision made against them, nor can there be any made, by the laws of men: and though these inward lusts are condemned by the law of God, yet inasmuch as they were not punishable by men, and could be covered with the guise of an external righteousness, multitudes who were born under, and brought up in that law, were secure and indolent about them, did not look upon them as sins, or as at all affecting their righteousness; but imagined that, "touching the righteousness of the law", they were "blameless", (Philippians 3:6); which was the case of all the Pharisees, and of the apostle whilst such: but when the law came and entered his conscience with power and light attending it, then he saw, such innumerable swarms of lusts in his heart, and these to be sinful, which he never saw and knew before: just as in a sunbeam we behold those numerous little bits of dust, which otherwise are indiscernible by us. Now since the law is of such use, not only to discover the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts and desires, that itself cannot be sinful.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 2.

Romans 7:8

But sin taking occasion by the commandment

By "the commandment" is meant, either the whole moral law, or that particular commandment, "thou shalt not covet", (Exodus 20:17), which, the Jews say, comprehends all;

``God, (say they F6,) caused them (the Israelites) to hear the ten words, which he concluded with this word, "thou shalt not covet";

(wb Mywlt Mlwkv) , “for all of them depend on that”: and to intimate, that whoever keeps this commandment, it is as if he kept the whole law, and whoever transgresses this, it is all one as if he transgressed the whole law;”

and no doubt but it does refer to any unlawful thought of, desire after, and inclination to anything forbidden in the other commandments. By “sin” is meant, not the devil, as some of the ancients thought; but the vitiosity and corruption of nature, indwelling sin, the law in the members that took “occasion” by the law of God; so that the law at most could only be an occasion, not the cause of sin, and besides, this was an occasion not given by the law, but taken by sin; so that it was sin, and not the law, which

wrought in [him] all manner of concupiscence.

The law forbidding every unclean thought, and covetous desire of unlawful objects, sin took an occasion through these prohibitions to work in him, stir up and excite concupiscence, evil desire after all manner of things forbidden by the law; hence it is clear that not the law, but sin, is exceeding sinful:

for without the law sin was dead;

not that, before the law of Moses was given, sin lay dead and unexerted, for during that interval between Adam and Moses sin was, and lived and reigned, and death by it, as much as at any other time; but when the apostle was without the law, that is, without the knowledge of the spirituality of it, before it came with power and light into his heart and conscience, sin lay as though it was dead; it was so in his apprehension, he fancied himself free from it, and that he was perfectly righteous.

Romans 7:9

For I was alive without the law once

The apostle says this, not in the person of Adam, as some have thought; who lived indeed, in a state of innocence, a perfectly holy and righteous life, but not without the law, which was the rule of his actions, and the measure of his obedience; he had the law of nature written upon his heart, and a positive law respecting the forbidden fruit given him, as a trial of his obedience; and though when he transgressed he became mortal, yet sin could not be said to revive in him, which never lived before; nor does the apostle speak in the person of a Jew, or the whole body of the people of Israel before

the law was given on Mount Sinai; before that time the sons of Abraham did not live without a law; for besides the law of nature, which they had in common with others, they were acquainted with other laws of God, as the laws of circumcision, sacrifices, and the several duties of religion; see (Genesis 18:19) ; and when the law did come from Mount Sinai, it had not such effects upon them as are here expressed: but the apostle is speaking of himself, and that not as in his state of infancy before he could discern between good and evil, but when grown up, and whilst a Pharisee; who, though he was born under the law, was brought up and more perfectly instructed in it than the common people were, and was a strict observer of it, yet was without the knowledge of the spirituality of it; he, as the rest of the Pharisees, thought it only regarded the outward actions, and did not reach to the spirits or souls of men, the inward thoughts and affections of the mind; the law was as it were at a distance from him, it had not as yet entered into his heart and conscience; and whilst this was his case he was “alive”, he did not know that he “was dead in trespasses and sins”, (Ephesians 2:1) , a truth he afterwards was acquainted with; nor that he was so much as disordered by sin; he thought himself healthful, sound, and whole, when he was diseased and full of wounds, bruises, and sores, from head to foot; he lived in the utmost peace and tranquillity, without the least ruffle and uneasiness, free from any terror or despondency, and in perfect security, being in sure and certain hope of eternal life; and concluded if ever any man went to heaven he certainly should, since, as he imagined, he lived a holy and righteous life, free of all blame, and even to perfection;

but when the commandment came;

not to Adam in the garden of Eden; nor to the Israelites on Mount Sinai; but into the heart and conscience of the apostle, with power and light from above:

sin revived;

it lift up its monstrous head, and appeared in its ugly shape, exceeding sinful indeed; it grew strong and exerted itself; its strugglings and opposition, its rebellion and corruption were seen and felt, which show that it was not dead before, only seemed to be so; it was in being, and it lived and acted before as now; the difference was not in that, but in the apostle’s sense and apprehension of it, who upon sight of it died away:

and I died;

he now saw himself a dead man, dead in sin, dead in law, under a sentence of death which he now had within himself; he saw he was deserving of eternal death, and all his hopes of eternal life by his obedience to the law of works died at once; he now experimentally learnt that doctrine he so much insisted afterwards in his ministry, and to the last maintained, that there can be no justification of a sinner by the deeds of the law, since by it is the knowledge of sin.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Abkath Rochel, l. 1. par. 1. p. 3. Ed. Huls

Romans 7:10

And the commandment which was ordained to life

The law which promised a continuance of an immortal life to Adam, in case of perfect obedience to it; and which was appointed to the Israelites, that by the observation of it they might live in the land of Canaan, and in the quiet and full possession of their privileges and enjoyments; but was never ordained to eternal life, or that men should obtain that by their obedience to it; since eternal life is the free gift of God, without respect to any works of men; see (Galatians 3:21) ; This same law, the apostle says,

I found to be unto death;

as it was an occasion, through the vitiosity of nature, of stirring up sin in him, which brought forth fruit unto death; as it convinced him that he was a dead man and worthy of death; as it threatened him with it, and struck all his hopes of eternal life dead, and left him in this condition without giving him the least direction or assistance whereby to obtain life.

Romans 7:11

For sin taking occasion by the commandment

As in (Romans 7:8) ,

deceived me;

either by promising pleasure or impunity: the same effect is ascribed by the Jews to the evil imagination or corruption of nature, which they say is called an enticer, (Mda htpmv) , “that deceives man” F7:

and by it slew me;

mortally wounded me: not the law, but sin by the law, deceived and slew him; so that as before, the law is

cleared from being the cause of sin, so here, from being the cause of death; for though the law is a killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death, yet it is not the cause of it; but sin, which is a transgression of the law, is that which deceives or leads out of the way, as the word signifies, and then kills. The metaphor is taken from a thief or a robber, who leads a man out of the way into some bypath, and then murders him.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3. & 150. 1.

Romans 7:12

Therefore the law is holy

This is a conclusion or inference drawn from the preceding discourse, in commendation of the law; that standing clear of any charge or imputation of sin, as being the cause of it. This epithet the apostle gives to the law is what the Jews frequently give it; worthy are the Israelites, say they F8,

‘‘to whom is given (avydq atyyrwa) “the holy law”; in which they study day and night.”

By “the law” is meant the whole body of the precepts of it in general; and by

the commandment,

either the same, or everyone of the commandments in particular, and especially that which is cited, “thou shall not covet”. Some have thought that the three properties of it design the threefold division of the law; and suppose that by that which is “holy” is meant the ceremonial law, which sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; by that which is “just”, the judicial law, which pointed out to the Jewish commonwealth what was right and wrong; and by that which is “good”, the moral law in all its precepts: but nothing is more certain, than that the moral law is only spoken of in this context, which may be said to be

holy,

because of its author, the holy God, from whom nothing can come but what is holy; and because of the matter of it, it is a transcript of the holy nature of God, a declaration of his holy will; it requires holiness both of heart and life; it forbids whatever is unholy, and commands nothing but what is holy; it teaches men to live holy, sober, righteous, and godly lives. It may be truly called

just,

or righteous, as it demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, or it will not admit of it as a righteousness; as it pronounces guilty, curses and condemns for every disobedience of it; as it deals impartially with persons the transgressors of it; and as it acquits believers upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ, the fulfilling end of it. It is rightly called

good,

from the author of it, God, from whom every good thing comes, and nothing else; from the matter of it, and from the use of it both to saints and sinners.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 Zohar in Gen. fol. 48. 4.

Romans 7:13

Was then that which is good, made death unto me?

&c.] An objection is started upon the last epithet in commendation of the law; and it is as if the objector should say, if the law is good, as you say, how comes it to pass that it is made death, or is the cause of death to you? can that be good, which is deadly, or the cause of death? or can that be the cause of death which is good? This objection taken out of the mouth of another person proceeds upon a mistake of the apostle's meaning; for though he had said that he died when the commandment came, and found by experience that it was unto death, yet does not give the least intimation that the law was the cause of his death; at most, that it was only an occasion, and that was not given by the law, but taken by sin, which, and not the law, deceived him and slew him. Nor is it any objection to the goodness of the law, that it is a ministration of condemnation and death to sinners; for "lex non damnans, non est lex", a law without a sanction or penalty, which has no power to condemn and punish, is no law, or at least a law of no use and service; nor is the judge, or the sentence which he according to law pronounces upon a malefactor, the cause of his death, but the crime which he is guilty of; and the case is the same here, wherefore the apostle answers to this objection with abhorrence and detestation of fixing any such charge upon the law, as being the cause of death to him, saying,

God forbid;

a way of speaking used by him, as has been observed, when anything is greatly disliked by him, and is far

from his thoughts. Moreover, he goes on to open the true end and reason of sin, by the law working death in his conscience;

but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good;

that is, the vitiosity and corruption of nature, which is designed by sin, took an occasion, "by that which is good", that is, the law, through its prohibition of lust, to work in me all manner of concupiscence, which brought forth fruit unto death; wherefore, upon the law's entrance into my heart and conscience, I received the sentence of death in myself, that so sin by it, "working death in me, might appear sin" to me, which I never knew before. This end was to be, and is answered by it, yea,

that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful;

that the corruption of nature might not only be seen and known to be sin, but exceeding sinful; as being not only contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, but as taking occasion by the pure and holy law of God to exert itself the more, and so appear to be as the words (kay') (uperbolhn amartwlov), may be rendered, "exceedingly a sinner", or "an exceeding great sinner"; that being the source and parent of all actual sins and transgressions; wherefore not the law, but sin, was the cause of death, which by the law is discovered to be so very sinful.

Romans 7:14

For we know that the law is spiritual

We who have a spiritual understanding of the law, who have been led into the true nature of it by the Spirit of God, know by experience that that itself is "spiritual"; and therefore can never be the cause of sin or death: the law may be said to be "spiritual", because it comes from the Spirit of God; and reaches to the spirit of man; it requires truth in the inward parts; spiritual service and obedience; a serving of it with our minds; a worshipping of God in spirit and truth; a loving of him with all our hearts and souls, as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty; and because it cannot be truly obeyed and conformed to without the assistance of the Spirit of God. To this spirituality of the law the apostle opposes himself,

but I am carnal, sold under sin:

from hence to the end of the chapter many are of opinion, that the apostle speaks in the person of an unregenerate man, or of himself as unregenerate; but

nothing is more clear, than that he speaks all along of himself in the first person, "I am carnal": (autov egw) , "I myself", as in (Romans 7:25) , and in the present tense of what he then was and found; whereas, when he speaks of his unregenerate state, and how it was with him under the first convictions of sin, he speaks of them as things past, (Romans 7:5-11) ; besides, several things which are said by the apostle can neither agree with him, nor any other, but as regenerate; such as to "hate evil", "delight in the law of God", and "serve it with the mind", (Romans 7:15 Romans 7:22 Romans 7:25) . Moreover, the distinctions between flesh and spirit, the inward and the outward man, and the struggle there is between them, are to be found in none but regenerate persons; and to say no more, the thanksgiving for deliverance from sin by Christ can only come from such; nor are any of the things said inapplicable to men that are born again, as will appear by the consideration of them as they follow: for when the apostle says, "I am carnal"; his meaning is, either that he was so by nature, and as he saw himself when sin through the law became exceeding sinful to him; or as he might be denominated from the flesh or corruption of nature which was still in him, and from the infirmities of the flesh he was attended with; just as the Corinthians, though sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, are said to be "carnal" on account of their envying, strife, and divisions, (1 Corinthians 3:1-4) , or in comparison of the "spiritual" law of God, which was now before him, and in which he was beholding his face as in a glass, and with which when compared, the holiest man in the world must be reckoned carnal. He adds, "sold under sin"; he did not "sell himself" to work wickedness, as Ahab, (1 Kings 21:25) , and others; he was passive and not active in it; and when at any time he with his flesh served the law of sin, he was not a voluntary, but an involuntary servant; besides, this may be understood of his other I, his carnal I, his unrenewed self, the old man which is always under sin, when the spiritual I, the new man, is never under the law of sin, but under the governing influence of the grace of God

Romans 7:15

For that which I do, I allow not

The apostle having cleared the law from the charge of being the cause either of sin or death, and taken the blame to himself, proceeds to give an account of the struggle and combat he found in himself between the flesh and spirit; "that which I do, I allow not". That

which he did was evil, since he allowed not of it; but this is to be understood not of any notorious crime committed by him, and repeated again and again; nor of a sinful course of life, for before his conversion he was not a profane man, but externally moral; and after his conversion, had his conversation in the world by the grace of God in righteousness and holiness; a vicious course of life being contrary to the grace of God implanted in him, and the doctrines of grace professed by him; but of internal lusts, the workings of corruptions in his heart, and which are real actions of the mind, together with the various frailties and infirmities of life: when that apostle says that what he did, (ginwskw) , "I know not": his meaning is, not that he was utterly ignorant of them, of their nature and operations; that he was insensible of their motions, and unconcerned about them; for his sense of them, and concern for them, are expressed by him in the strongest terms, "I know", "I find", "I see", "O wretched man" (Romans 7:18 Romans 7:21 Romans 7:23 Romans 7:24) ; but either that the efforts and effects of sin in him were so sadden, and at an unawares, that he was sometimes overtaken and held captive, before he knew well where he was, or, what he was doing; or the sense is, that he had not a full knowledge of the evil of his heart, the corruptions of his nature, nor did he understand all his infirmities and the errors of his life; or else the meaning is, I own it not as right, but confess it to be wrong, I do not acknowledge these actions as the productions of the new man, they are alien to him, but as the deeds of the old man; or rather, "I do not approve" of them, I dislike, abhor, and detest them; I cannot excuse or palliate them, but must condemn them; so words of knowledge in the Hebrew language are expressive of love, liking, and approbation; see (Psalms 1:6) (Hosea 8:4) (Genesis 18:19) ; on which last text, "I know him", says Jarchi, (hbx Nwvl) , "it is the language of love", or a phrase expressive of strong affection; and so here, I know not, I do not like, love, and approve of these things, or I do not "allow" of them, and indulge myself in them, I loathe them and myself for them; and is this talking like an unregenerate man? can it be thought that the apostle speaks of himself as unregenerate, or represents such a man?

for what I would, that do I not;

what he desired and willed was good, though he did it not; and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, "for not the good which I would, I do": and so the next clause, "but the evil which I hate, I do": and what was that? he

would have had his thoughts always employed about the best things; he would have had his affections continually and alone set on God, Christ, and the things of another world; he would he was desirous to keep the whole law of God, and do the whole will of God, and live without sin, and as the angels do in heaven: now such a will as this is never to be found in unregenerate persons; this is from God, and the power of his grace: when he says he did not what he willed, what he was desirous of, and bent upon, his sense is, not that he never did any good thing he willed; for he did many good things, as every good man does, but he did not always do the good he willed, and never perfectly, nor anything without grace and strength from Christ: he adds,

but what I hate, that do I;

sin was what he hated; it being contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, to the good and righteous law of God, and was in itself, to his view, exceeding sinful: he hated vain thoughts, unclean desires, revengeful lusts, the secret motions of all sin in his heart, and the various evil actions of life; which can never be said of an unregenerate man; who loves sin, delights in iniquity, and takes pleasure in them that do it; and yet what the apostle hated he did; he wrought with his carnal I, his flesh, and through the power of it, and force of temptation, though not without reluctance, remorse, and repentance. The Karaite Jews, which were the better sort of them, say and hold some things, not much unlike to what is here delivered;

“ though a man (say they F9) should transgress some of the commandments, or the commandments in part, (Upxh du le al) (hwat trw-bgtl) , “through the strength of lust, and not on account of, or with pleasure not delight”, he shall be one of those that shall enter into paradise.”

FOOTNOTES:

F9 R. Eliahu in Addareth, c. 3. apud Triglaud de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 176.

Romans 7:16

If then I do that which I would not

This is a corollary, or an inference from what he had related of his own experience; that since what he did, though it was contrary to the law of God, yet was what he did not will nor allow of, but hated, it must be a clear point, that he

consented to the law, that it was good;

lovely and amiable; that it forbade those things which were hateful, and commanded those things which were desirable to a good man; and so is acknowledged to be a very beautiful rule of obedience, walk, and conversation

Romans 7:17

Now then, it is no more I that do it

This is another inference, deduced from what is before said, that since he did not approve, but hated what he did, and willed the contrary, it was not he as spiritual, as born again, as a new man, a new creature, that did it; see (1 John 3:9) . He says,

But sin that dwelleth in me;

the old man, the carnal I, the evil present with him, the law in his members; which not only existed in him, and wrought in him, and that at times very strongly, but dwelt in him, had its abode in him, as it has in all regenerate persons, and will have, as long as they are in the body.

Romans 7:18

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh

The apostle goes on to give some further account of himself, what he knew, and was fully assured of by long experience; as that

dwelleth no good thing

in him, that is, in his flesh, or carnal self; for otherwise there were many good things dwelt in him; there was the good work of grace, and the good word of God in him, and even Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelt in him; but his meaning is, that there was no good thing naturally in him; no good thing of his own putting there; nothing but what God had put there; no good thing, but what was owing to Christ, to the grace of God, and influence of the Spirit; or as he himself explains it, there was no good thing in his “flesh”; in the old man that was in him, which has nothing in his nature good; no good thing comes out of him, nor is any good thing done by him: and this explanative and limiting clause, “that is, in my flesh”, clearly proves, that the apostle speaks of himself, and as regenerate; for had he spoke in the person of an unregenerate man, there would have been no room nor reason for such a restriction, seeing an unregenerate man is nothing else but flesh, and has nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in him; and who does not know, that no good thing dwells in such persons?

whereas the apostle intimates by this explication, that he had something else in him beside flesh, and which is opposed to it; and that is spirit, or the new man, which is of a spiritual nature, and is seated in the spirit, or soul, and comes from the Spirit of God; and in this spiritual man dwell good things, for “the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth”; so that though there was no good thing dwelling in his flesh, in the old man, yet there were good things dwelling in his spirit, in the new and spiritual man, the hidden man of the heart: and he adds,

to will is present with me;

which must be understood, not of the power and faculty of the will, with respect to things natural and civil, which is common to all men; nor of a will to that which is evil, which is in wicked men; but of a will to that which was good, which he had not of himself, but from God, and is only to be found in regenerate persons; and denotes the readiness of his mind and will to that which is spiritually good, like that which Christ observes of his disciples, when he says, “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”, (Matthew 26:41) , which may serve much to illustrate the passage before us: since it follows,

but how to perform that which is good, I find not;

he found he had no strength of himself to do what he willed; and that he could do nothing without Christ; and that what he did by the strength and grace of Christ, he did not do perfectly. To will to live without sin, not to have a lustful or a revengeful thought in his breast, was present with him, but how to perform, how to live in this manner, which was so desirable to him, being born again, he found not. It may be asked, how does this agree with what the apostle says, “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?” (Philippians 2:13) . To this it may be replied, that when God does work in his people both to will and to do, he does not work both equally alike, or to the same degree, so that the work answers to the will; God never works in them so to do, as to will, for when they are wrought in, acted upon, and influenced to do the most, and that in the best manner, they never do all that they would; and sometimes God works in them to will, when he does not work in them to do; as in the case of the disciples of Christ, in whom he worked to will to watch with Christ an hour, but did not work in them to do, (Matthew 26:40) ; and whenever he works in the saints, whether to will or to do, or both, it is always of

his own good pleasure.

Romans 7:19

For the good that I would, I do not

The apostle here repeats what he had delivered in (Romans 7:15 Romans 7:16) to strengthen and confirm this part of his experience; that though he had a will to that which was good, yet he wanted power, and had none of himself to perform; and therefore often did what he would not, and what he would he did not.

Romans 7:21

I find then a law

This is to be understood either of the corruption of nature, which he found by experience to be in him; and which, because of its force, power, and prevalence it sometimes had in him, he calls “a law”; it forcibly demanding compliance with its lusts; and is the same with what he calls “evil”, and which the Jews so frequently style (erh ruy) “the evil imagination”, by which they mean the corruption of nature; and one of the seven names, and the first of them, by which it is called, they tell us F11, is, (er) , “evil”; the very name it goes by here, and which they say God calls it, (Genesis 6:5) ; and well may it be so called, since it is originally, naturally, and continually evil; it is evil in its nature and consequences; it is the source and spring of all evil:

that when I would do good;

says the apostle, as soon as any good thought arises in me, any good resolution is entered into by me, or I am about to do anything that is good,

evil,

the vitiosity of nature,

is present with me,

and hinders me; it came into the world with me, and it has continued with me ever since; it cleaves close unto me, it lies very nigh me, and whenever there is any motion to that which is good, it starts up, which seemed to lie asleep before, and exerts itself, so that I cannot do the good I would. The Jews say F12, there are (twbbl ytv) , “two hearts” in man, the good imagination, and the evil imagination. The apostle here speaks as of two wills in regenerate men, one to good, and another to evil: or this may be understood of the law of God, which he found agreed with his mind, willing that which is good, though sin lay so near to him; or he found that willing that which was good was the law of God, very agreeable

to it; and that the law was on his side, favouring him, encouraging him to that which is good, though sin kept so close to him; to which sense agree the following words.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & Kiddushin, fol. 30. 2.

F12 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 4.

Romans 7:22

For I delight in the law of God

This an unregenerate man cannot do; he does not like its commands, they are disagreeable to his corrupt nature; and as it is a threatening, cursing, damning law, it can never be delighted in by him: the moralist, the Pharisee, who obeys it externally, do not love it, nor delight in it; he obeys it not from love to its precepts, but from fear of its threatenings; from a desire of popular esteem, and from low, mercenary, selfish views, in order to gain the applause of men, and favour of God: only a regenerate man delights in the law of God; which he does, as it is fulfilled by Christ, who has answered all the demands of it: and as it is in the hands of Christ, held forth by him as a rule of holy walk and conversation; and as it is written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, to which he yields a voluntary and cheerful obedience: he serves it with his mind, of a ready mind freely, and without any constraint but that of love; he delights together with the law, as the word here used signifies; the delight is mutual and reciprocal, the law delights in him, and he delights in the law; and they both delight in the selfsame things, and particularly in the perfect obedience which the Son of God has yielded to it. The apostle adds,

after the inward man;

by which he means the renewed man, the new man, or new nature, formed in his soul; which had its seat in the inward part, is an internal principle, oil in the vessel of the heart, a seed under ground, the kingdom within us, the hidden man of the heart, which is not obvious to everyone's view, it being not anything that is external, though never so good: this in its nature is agreeable to the law of God, and according to this a regenerate man delights in it: but then this restrictive limiting clause supposes another man, the old man, the carnal I, according to which the apostle did not delight in the law of God; and proves, that he speaks of himself as regenerate, and not as unregenerate, or as representing

an unregenerate man, because no such distinction is to be found in such a person; nor does such a person delight at all, in any sense, upon any consideration in the law of God, but is enmity against it, and not subjected to it; nor can he be otherwise, without the grace of God.

Romans 7:23

But I see another law in my members

That is, he saw, he perceived it by experience; he felt the force and power of inbred corruption working in him, and as a law demanding obedience to it; and which he might well call "another law", it being not only distinct from, but opposite to the law of God he delighted in; the one is good, the other evil; this other law is a transgression of the law of God, and which he observed to be "in [his] members", i.e. in the members of his body; not that it had its seat only, or chiefly in his body, and the parts of it, but because it exerted itself by them, it made use of them to fulfil its lusts: the same phrase is used in the Targum on (Psalms 38:3) ; which renders the words there thus, there is no peace, (yrbab) , "in my members" because of my sin: now this law was, says he,

warring against the law of my mind;

by the "law of [his] mind" is meant, either the law of God written on his mind in conversion, and which he delighted in, and served with his mind, as renewed by the Spirit of God; or the new nature in him, the principle of grace wrought in his mind, called "the law" of it, because it was the governing principle there; which reigns, and will reign in every regenerate person through righteousness, unto eternal life, though the law of sin opposes all its force and power against it; that is not only contrary to it, lusts against it, but wars, and commits acts of hostility against it: the state of regenerate persons is a warfare, they have many enemies to combat with, as Satan and the world; but those of their own household, within themselves, in their own hearts, are the worst of all; there is a civil war in them, as it were a company of two armies, flesh and spirit, sin and grace, combating together; and so it will be as long as this life lasts; so true is that saying of the Jews F13, in which they agree with the apostle,

``as long as the righteous live, (גלחמים מן ירנה) , "they are at war with the corruption of their nature"; when they die they are at rest:"

hence we read of (מלחמת ין הר) , "the war of the

evil imagination" {n}: but what is worst of all, this is sometimes

bringing [them] into captivity to the law of sin, which is in [their] members;

that is, to itself; for the law in the members, and the law of sin in the members, must be the same: and it may be said to bring into captivity to itself, when it only endeavours to do it, though it does not effect it; for sometimes words which express an effect only design the endeavour to effect, but not that itself; see (Ezekiel 24:13) (Genesis 37:21 Genesis 37:22) (Exodus 8:18) . But admitting that this phrase intends the real and actual effecting of it, it is to be understood of a captivity to sin, different from that an unregenerate man is in; who is a voluntary captive to sin and Satan, gives up himself to such slavery and bondage, and rather goes, than is brought or carried into it; whereas a regenerate man is, through the force of sin, and power of temptation, violently drawn and carried into captivity; in which he is held against his will, and to his great uneasiness: besides, this expression does not denote absolute dominion, which sin has not over a regenerate man; nor is it utterly inconsistent with his character as such; for as a subject of one nation may be taken a prisoner, and be carried captive into another nation, and yet remain a subject where he was, and does not become one of that country of which he is carried captive; so a regenerate man, being carried captive by sin, does not come under the absolute dominion of sin, or cease to be a subject of the kingdom of grace, or in other words, a regenerate person: moreover, the very phrase of "bringing into captivity" supposes that the person before was not a captive; whereas every unregenerate man one, was always so, and never otherwise: add to all this, that this captivity was very distressing and uneasy to the person, and makes him cry out, "O wretched man" whereas the captivity of an unregenerate person is very agreeable to him; he likes his prison, he loves his chains, and do not choose to be in any other state and condition; though, as the Jews F15 say, there is no captivity (hmvnh twlgk) , "like the captivity of the soul"; and nothing so grievous and afflictive to a good man as that is. The apostle uses much such language as his countrymen do, who frequently represent man as having two principles in him, the one good, the other bad; the one they call (erh ruy) , "the evil imagination", or corruption of nature; the other they call (הטוב) (יה) , "the good imagination", or principle of grace and goodness; which they say F16,

are at continual war with each other, and the one is sometimes (נשבה) , "carried captive" by the other. The good imagination, they say F17, is like to one that (האורנין) (הבוש בבית) , "is bound in a prison"; as it is said, "out of prison he cometh to reign"; to which agrees what they say F18,

``how shall I serve my Creator whilst I am (איר ירי) , "a captive to my corruption", and a servant to my lust?"

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Bereshit Rabba, Parash. 9. fol. 7. 4.

F14 Tzeror Hammer, fol. 93. 3. & 113. 3. & 115. 2. & 144. 4. & 145. 1, 2.

F15 Caphtor, fol. 14. 2.

F16 Zohar in Gen. fol. 56. 3.

F17 Pirke Abot R. Nathan, c. 16. fol. 5. 2.

F18 Machzor Jud. Hispan. apud L. Capell. in Rom. vi. 16.

Romans 7:24

O wretched man that I am

Not as considered in Christ, for as such he was a most happy man, being blessed with all spiritual blessings, and secure from all condemnation and wrath; nor with respect to his inward man, which was renewing day by day, and in which he enjoyed true spiritual peace and pleasure; nor with regard to his future state, of the happiness of which he had no doubt: he knew in whom he had believed; he was fully persuaded nothing could separate him from the love of God; and that when he had finished his course, he should have the crown of righteousness laid up for him: but this exclamation he made on account of the troubles he met with in his Christian race; and not so much on account of his reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake; though these were many and great, yet these did not move or much affect him, he rather took delight and pleasure in them; but on account of that continual combat between, the flesh and spirit in him; or by reason of that mass of corruption and body of sin he carried about with him; ranch such a complaint Isaiah makes, (Isaiah 6:5) , which in the Septuagint is, (w talav egw) , "O miserable I". This shows him to be, and to speak of himself as a regenerate man; since an unregenerate man feels no uneasiness upon that score, or makes any complaint of it, saying as here,

who shall deliver me from the body of this death? or “this body of death”; by which some understand, this mortal body, or the body of flesh subject to death for sin; and suppose the apostle expresses his desire to quit it, to depart out of it, that he might enjoy an immortal life, being weary of the burden of this mortal body he carried about with him: so Philo the Jew F19 represents the body as a burden to the soul, which (nekroforousa), “it carries about as a dead carcass”, and never lays down from his birth till his death: though it should be observed, that when the apostle elsewhere expresses an earnest longing after a state of immortality and glory, some sort of reluctance and unwillingness to leave the body is to be observed, which is not to be discerned here; and was this his sense, one should think he would rather have said, when shall I be delivered? or why am I not delivered? and not who shall deliver me? though admitting this to be his meaning, that he was weary of the present life, and wanted to be rid of his mortal body, this did not arise from the troubles and anxieties of life, with which he was pressed, which oftentimes make wicked men long to die; but from the load of sin, and burden of corruption, under which he groaned, and still bespeaks him a regenerate man; for not of outward calamities, but of indwelling sin is he all along speaking in the context: wherefore it is better by “this body of death” to understand what he in (Romans 6:6) calls “the body of sin”; that mass of corruption that lodged in him, which is called “a body”, because of its fleshly carnal nature; because of its manner of operation, it exerts itself by the members of the body; and because it consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and “a body of death”, because it makes men liable to death: it was that which the apostle says “slew” him, and which itself is to a regenerate man, as a dead carcass, stinking and loathsome; and is to him like that punishment Mezentius inflicted on criminals, by fastening a living body to a putrid carcass F20: and it is emphatically called the body of “this death”, referring to the captivity of his mind, to the law of sin, which was as death unto him: and no wonder therefore he so earnestly desires deliverance, saying, “who shall deliver me?” which he speaks not as being ignorant of his deliverer, whom he mentions with thankfulness in (Romans 7:25); or as doubting and despairing of deliverance, for he was comfortably assured of it, and therefore gives thanks beforehand for it; but as expressing the inward pantings, and earnest breathings of his soul after it; and as declaring the difficulty of it, yea, the impossibility

of its being obtained by himself, or by any other than he, whom he had in view: he knew he could not deliver himself from sin; that the law could not deliver him; and that none but God could do it; and which he believed he would, through Jesus Christ his Lord.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 De Agricultura, p. 191.

F20 Alexander ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5.

Romans 7:25

I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord

There is a different reading of this passage; some copies read, and so the Vulgate Latin version, thus, “the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord”; which may be considered as an answer to the apostle’s earnest request for deliverance, “who shall deliver me?” the grace of God shall deliver me. The grace of God the Father, which is communicated through Christ the Mediator by the Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ, the principle of grace formed in the soul by the Spirit of God, which reigns in the believer as a governing principle, through righteousness unto eternal life, will in the issue deliver from indwelling sin, and all the effects of it: but the more general reading is, “thanks be to God”, or “I thank God”; the object of thanksgiving is God, as the Father of Christ, and the God of all grace: the medium of it is Christ as Mediator, through whom only we have access to God; without him we can neither pray to him, nor praise him aright; our sacrifices of praise are only acceptable to God, through Christ; and as all our mercies come to us through him, it is but right and fitting that our thanksgivings should pass the same way: the thing for which thanks is given is not expressed, but is implied, and is deliverance; either past, as from the power of Satan, the dominion of sin, the curse of the law, the evil of the world, and from the hands of all spiritual enemies, so as to endanger everlasting happiness; or rather, future deliverance, from the very being of sin: which shows, that at present, and whilst in this life, saints are not free from it; that it is God only that must, and will deliver from it; and that through Christ his Son, through whom we have victory over every enemy, sin, Satan, law, and death; and this shows the apostle’s sure and certain faith and hope of this matter, who concludes his discourse on this head thus:

so then with the mind I myself serve the law of

God, but with the flesh the law of sin;

observe, he says, “I myself”, and not another; whence it is clear, he does not represent another man in this discourse of his; for this is a phrase used by him, when he cannot possibly be understood of any other but himself; see (Romans 9:3) (2 Corinthians 10:1) (12:13); he divides himself as it were into two parts, the mind, by which he means his inward man, his renewed self; and “the flesh”, by which he designs his carnal I, that was sold under sin: and hereby he accounts for his serving, at different times, two different laws; “the law of God”, written on his mind, and in the service of which he delighted as a regenerate man; “and the law of sin”, to which he was sometimes carried captive: and it should be taken notice of, that he does not say “I have served”, as referring to his past state of unregeneracy, but “I serve”, as respecting his present state as a believer in Christ, made up of flesh and spirit; which as they are two different principles, regard two different laws: add to all this, that this last account the apostle gives of himself, and which agrees with all he had said before, and confirms the whole, was delivered by him, after he had with so much faith and fervency given thanks to God in a view of his future complete deliverance from sin; which is a clinching argument and proof that he speaks of himself, in this whole discourse concerning indwelling sin, as a regenerate person.

INTRODUCTION ROMANS 8

As the former chapter shows that sanctified ones are not free from the being of sin in them, which is a ground of general complaint and uneasiness; this chapter shows, that justified ones are freed from the guilt of sin, and secure from punishment for it; and have the utmost reason to rejoice and be glad, and even to triumph in a plerophory and full assurance of faith, on account of the various privileges they enjoy, through the grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit; and which are distinctly, largely, and severally mentioned: it begins, Ro 8:1, with taking notice of a particular privilege saints have in Christ, and, by virtue of union to him, security from all condemnation; and which is inferred from their sure and certain deliverance from sin by Christ, Ro 8:25, the persons sharing in this privilege are described by their being in Christ, and by their walking after the Spirit of Christ, in consequence of it: a reason confirming this privilege is given, Ro 8:2, taken either from the Gospel, declaring the saints’ freedom from the law; or from the power and efficacy of the Spirit,

delivering them from the tyranny and dominion of sin; or rather from the holiness of Christ’s human nature, as a branch of their justification: this privilege is made more fully to appear, and the saints’ interest in it by the mission of Christ, to bring in everlasting righteousness for them, which is the foundation of it, Ro 8:3, the occasion of which was the weakness of the law, or rather the impotency of man, through the corruption of nature, to fulfil the law: the sender, or the efficient cause of this mission, is God the Father; the person sent, his own Son; the manner in which he was sent, in human nature, which had the appearance of being sinful; what God did in it, he condemned sin in it; which is a reason, why there is no condemnation to them, that are in him; and the end of all this, Ro 8:4, was, that the law of righteousness might be perfectly fulfilled by Christ for them, or by them in him; who are described in part, as in Ro 8:1, upon the repetition of which part of the description, the apostle proceeds to show the difference between unregenerate and regenerate persons, Ro 8:5, partly by their characters; the one being carnal, or after the flesh, the other being spiritual, or after the Spirit; and by their different affections, the one minding the things of the flesh, the other the things of the Spirit; the different issue and effect of which, namely, a carnal and a spiritual mind are observed, Ro 8:6, death following upon the one, life and peace upon the other; the reasons of which, with respect to the former, are given, Ro 8:7, taken from the enmity of the carnal mind to God, and the non-subjection of it to the law of God, and the impossibility of its being subject to it; and therefore nothing but death can be expected; from whence this conclusion is made, Ro 8:8, that unregenerate men are not in a state, nor in a capacity to please God, or do what is acceptable to him, the above being the disposition and temper of their minds: and then in Ro 8:9, the apostle returns to the argument from whence he had digressed, and suggests, that though he had said the above things of unregenerate men, he had other thoughts of those to whom he writes; they were not in the flesh, nor minded the things of the flesh, and so were not liable to condemnation and death; and which he proves by the inhabitation of the Spirit of God in them; for such who have him not, have no proof nor evidence of their being Christ’s, and so consequently have no proof of their security from condemnation; and partly by Christ’s being in them, and which is the evidence of their being in Christ, and so of the above privilege, Ro 8:10, the consequence of which is, that

though by reason of sin the body is mortal, and does die, yet the soul lives not only naturally, but spiritually, by faith in Christ now, and in glory hereafter, by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed to it, and so is free from condemnation and death; besides, by virtue of the Spirit's dwelling in them, their mortal bodies will be quickened in the general resurrection, Ro 8:11, and from all these blessings of divine goodness, both in soul and body, the apostle infers, that the saints are under obligation, not to live in a carnal, but in a spiritual manner, Ro 8:12, and to which he exhorts, Ro 8:13, and presses by motives, taken from the different consequences of those things; death following by living after the flesh, and life through the mortification of sin, by the Spirit of God: and whereas the walking after the Spirit, by which he had described those that are safe from condemnation, is owing to their being led by him; and their being led by him, being an evidence of their divine sonship, Ro 8:14, from hence he passes to consider the privilege of adoption: and that these saints were interested in this privilege, he proves Ro 8:15, partly by their not having the spirit of bondage which belongs to servants; and partly by their having the spirit of adoption, who had made known this grace unto them, and their interest in it: and that they had received him as a spirit of adoption, was evident by their calling God their Father under his influence; and also by the witness he bore to their spirits, that they were the children of God, Ro 8:16, of which they were conscious: and from this privilege of adoption, the apostle concludes heirship, Ro 8:17, and which is of such a nature, that there is none like it; both with respect to the subject of it, God himself; with respect to him with whom they are heirs, Christ Jesus; and the way in which they come to share the glorious inheritance with him, is through suffering with him, and for him; and this they need not grudge to do, since there is no comparison between their sufferings, and the glory they shall enjoy, Ro 8:18, which both Jews and Gentiles were in the expectation of; the latter of which are described in Ro 8:19-22, by their name, the creature, the whole creation; and by their present condition, the Gospel being come among them to the conversion of many, which raised an expectation of many sons and daughters being born to God among them, Ro 8:19, and by their former state and condition, Ro 8:20, which is mentioned, to illustrate the grace of God in the present blessing bestowed upon them, in sending the Gospel to them; which state was a subjection to vanity, through the god of this world, who

led them captive at his will, Ro 8:21, and then by the deliverance of them, they were in hope and expectation of, from bondage to liberty, Ro 8:21, and this groaning and travailing: in birth in a spiritual sense, for the bringing forth of many sons to God among the Gentiles, the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who had preached the Gospel among them, were witnesses of, Ro 8:22, yea, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also, who are described as having the first fruits of the Spirit, Ro 8:23, were waiting for the manifestation of the children of God among the Gentiles, with them to complete at last the mystical body, who shall share together the glory before spoken of, which their sonship and heirship entitle them to; and for which there is encouragement to wait with patience and in hope, from the connection of salvation with the grace of hope; and from, the nature of the thing hoped for, which is unseen, but certain, Ro 8:24,25. From hence the apostle proceeds to consider another privilege which the saints have, who are in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, the Spirit helps their infirmities; particularly in prayer, the matter of which, in some cases, they are at a loss about, Ro 8:26, and this he does, by making intercession for them; the manner in which this is done in them, is with unutterable groans; and the rule according to which it is made, is the will of God, the mind of the Spirit being known by the searcher of hearts, Ro 8:27, in a word, such are the privileges of believers in Christ, that every thing in the whole world, in heaven, and in earth, in themselves and others, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse, work together for their good, so that nothing can go wrong with them in the issue, Ro 8:28, who are described by their love to God, and by their effectual calling, according to his purpose; which being mentioned, leads the apostle to the source and spring of all these and other privileges, the everlasting love of God; signified by his foreknowledge of his people, Ro 8:29, which is the cause of their predestination to a conformity to the image of Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; with which predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, are inseparably connected, Ro 8:30, from all which blessings of grace it may be concluded, that God is on the side of such persons, who are interested in these favours; and nothing is to be feared, but every good thing is to be expected by them, Ro 8:31, which is confirmed by an argument from the greater to the lesser, that if God has given his Son for them, he will freely give all things to them, Ro 8:32, in a view of which, the apostle rises up in a triumph of faith, and challenges all

the enemies of the saints, and denies that any charge can be brought against them of any avail, since God is the justifier of them, Ro 8:33, or that they shall ever enter into condemnation, being secured from it by the death of Christ; and which security is yet more strengthened by his resurrection, session at the right hand of God, and intercession for them, Ro 8:34, and then asks, since Christ has shown such love to them, by these instances of it, what can separate from it, Ro 8:35, and enumerates several things which befall the saints in this life, which, however mean and abject they may render them in the esteem of men, do not at all abate the love of Christ to them: that such is their case, that they are exposed to afflictions and sufferings, and even death itself, for the sake of Christ, is proved Ro 8:36, by a testimony out of Ps 44:22, and then an answer is returned to the above question in the negative, that none of the things mentioned could separate them from the love of Christ; so far from it, that by virtue of Christ who had loved them, they were conquerors, and more than conquerors in all these things, and over all their enemies, Ro 8:37, and the chapter is concluded in Ro 8:38,39, with the full and firm persuasion of the apostle, that nothing in the whole universe, in the whole compass of created beings, be they what they will, good or bad, or which are or shall be, an enumeration of many of which is made, should ever separate him, or any of the people of God from his love, which is in Christ Jesus: so that upon the whole, notwithstanding indwelling sin, notwithstanding the various afflictions which attend them in this world, yet in consideration of the many privileges they enjoy, and the glory they are heirs of, they have great reason to rejoice, and look upon themselves to be in the most safe and happy condition.

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things

of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 8

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now, no condemnation

The apostle having discoursed largely in the preceding chapter, concerning the struggle and combat believers feel within themselves, and opened the true causes and reasons of the saints' grievances and complaints, and what gives them the greatest uneasiness in this life, proceeds in this to take notice of the solid ground and foundation they have of spiritual peace and joy; which arise from their justification and adoption, the purposes and decrees of God, and particularly the everlasting and unchangeable love of God in Christ, the source, spring, and security, of all the blessings of grace. The chapter begins with a most comfortable account of the safety of believers in Christ; the apostle does not say there is nothing condemnable in them, for sin is in them and is condemnable, and condemned by them; and is hurtful to their spiritual joy and comfort, though it cannot bring them into condemnation, because of their being in Christ Jesus: he says there is (ouden katakrima) , "not one condemnation" to them, or one sentence of condemnation against them; which must be understood not of illegal ones, for they are liable to many condemnations from their hearts, from the world and the devil; but of legal, justifiable ones, and there are none such, neither from God the Father, for he justifies; nor from the Son, for by his righteousness they are justified; nor from the Holy Spirit, who bears witness to their spirits, that they are in a state of justification: there is not one condemnation lies against them, with respect to their numerous sins, original and actual, though every sin deserves one; not one from the law of God, of which sin is a transgression, for though that is a condemning law, yet it is only so to them that are under it; not to them that are Christ's, whom he has redeemed from it: moreover, the apostle says, that there is no condemnation now to the saints; which "now" must not be considered, as if it supposes that there was formerly condemnation to them; it is true indeed they were under a sentence of condemnation, as considered in Adam, and under a covenant of works with him, and in their own apprehensions when convicted; but as considered in Christ, as the elect of God always were, and who was their surety, and so their security from all eternity, they never were in a state of condemnation: nor does this suppose, that there may be condemnation to them hereafter, though not now; for sin, the cause of condemnation, is removed; Christ has bore the condemnation their sins deserved in himself; their justification is from all sin, past, present, and to come; their union to Christ is indissoluble, and neither the love of Christ, nor the

justice of God, will admit of their condemnation; for this "now", is not an "adverb" of time, but a "note of illation"; the apostle inferring this privilege, either from the grace of God, which issues in eternal life, (Romans 6:23) ; or from that certain deliverance believers shall have from sin, for which he gives thanks, (Romans 7:24 Romans 7:25) ; The privilege itself here mentioned is, "no condemnation": condemnation is sometimes put for the cause of it, which is sin, original and actual; now though God's elect are sinners, both by nature and practice, and after conversion have sin in them, their sanctification being imperfect, yet there is none in them with respect to justification; all is transferred to Christ, and he has removed all away; he has procured the pardon of all by his blood, he has abolished all by his sacrifice, he justifies from all by his righteousness, and saves his people from all their sins: condemnation may also be considered with respect to guilt; all mankind are guilty of Adam's sin, and are guilty creatures, as they are actual transgressors of the law; and when convinced by the Spirit of God, acknowledge themselves to be so; and upon the repetition of sin, contract fresh guilt on their consciences; but an heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is clear of guilt; for all the guilt of sin is removed to Christ, and he has took it away; hence there is no obligation to punishment on them, for whom Christ died: again, condemnation may design the sentence of it: now though the law's sentence passed upon all in Adam, and so upon God's elect, as considered in him; yet as this sentence has been executed on Christ, as their surety, in their room and stead, there is none lies against them: once more, condemnation may mean actual damnation, or eternal death, the wages of sin, which those who are in Christ shall never die; they are ordained to eternal life, and are redeemed from this death; they are made alive by Christ, and have eternal life secured to them in him, and which they shall certainly enjoy: the persons interested in this privilege are described, as such

which are in Christ Jesus;

not as mere professors are in Christ, who may be lost and damned: but this being in Christ, respects either that union and interest which the elect of God have in Christ, from everlasting: being loved by him with an everlasting love; betrothed to him in a conjugal relation; chosen in him before the foundation of the world; united to him as members to an head; considered in him in the covenant of grace, when he engaged for them as their surety; and so they were preserved in

him, notwithstanding their fall in Adam; in time he took upon him their nature, and represented them in it; they were reckoned in him when he hung upon the cross, was buried, rose again, and sat down in heavenly places; in consequence of which union to Christ, and being in him, they are secure from all condemnation: or this may respect an open and manifestative being in Christ at conversion, when they become new creatures, pass from death to life, and so shall never enter into condemnation: hence they stand further described, as such

who walk not after the flesh;

by which is meant, not the ceremonial law, but the corruption of nature, or the corrupt nature of man, called "flesh"; because propagated by carnal generation, has for its object fleshly things, discovers itself mostly in the flesh, and makes persons carnal and fleshly; the apostle does not say, there is no condemnation to them that have no flesh in them, for this regenerate persons have; nor to them that are in the flesh, that is, the body; but who walk not after the flesh, that is, corrupt nature; and it denotes such, who do not follow the dictates of it, do not make it their guide, or go on and persist in a continued series of sinning:

but after the spirit,

by which is meant, not spiritual worship, in opposition to carnal ordinances; but rather, either a principle of grace, in opposition to corrupt nature, called "Spirit", from the author, subject, and nature of it; or the Holy Spirit of God, the efficient cause of all grace: to walk after him, is to make him our guide, to follow his dictates, influences, and directions; as such do, who walk by faith on Christ, and in imitation of him, in the ways of righteousness and holiness; and such persons walk pleasantly, cheerfully, and safely: now let it be observed, that this walk and conversation of the saints, is not the cause of there being no condemnation to them; but is descriptive of the persons interested in such a privilege; and is evidential of their right unto it, as well as of their being in Christ: and it may be further observed, that there must be union to Christ, or a being in him, before there can be walking after the Spirit. The phrase, "but after the Spirit", is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; and the whole description of the persons in some copies, and in the Ethiopic version

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

These words are of difficult interpretation. They may be understood of the Gospel revealing and declaring deliverance from the law of Moses; wherefore there can be “no condemnation”, (Romans 8:1), by it. The Gospel may be designed by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”; which may be called a law, not as succeeding the law of works, by which that is abrogated; nor as requiring conditions to be performed, or as enjoining duties to be observed, or as delivering out threatenings in case of disobedience; but as it is a doctrine, order, and chain of truths, as the Hebrew word (hrwt) signifies, and which is sometimes used for the Gospel, (Isaiah 2:3) (42:4) as (nomov) is, (Romans 3:27). It may be called the law, or doctrine “of the Spirit”, because the Spirit is the author of it, and makes it powerful and effectual to the good of souls; by it the Spirit of God is conveyed into the heart; and the substance of it are spiritual things: and the “law of the Spirit of life”, because it discovers the way of life and salvation by Christ; is the means of quickening dead sinners; of working faith in them, by which they live on Christ, and of reviving drooping saints; and also it affords spiritual food, for the support of life: and this may be said to be “in Christ”, or by him, inasmuch as it comes from, and is concerning him; he is the sum, the substance, and subject matter of it:

the law of sin and death

may intend the law of Moses, called “the law of sin”; not as if it was sinful, or commanded or encouraged sin, for it severely prohibits it; but because by it, through the corruption of man’s nature, sin is irritated, and made to abound; it is the strength of sin, and by it is the knowledge of it: and it may be called “the law of death”, because it threatened with death, in case of disobedience; it sentences and adjudges transgressors to death; and when it is attended with power, it strikes dead all a man’s hopes of life, by obedience to it; it leaves persons dead as it finds them, and gives no life, nor hopes of it; by it none can live, or be justified: now, though Christ is the author of deliverance from it, yet the Gospel is the means of revealing and declaring this deliverance; which designs not an exemption from obedience to it, but freedom from the curse and condemnation of it; and this sense well agrees with (Romans 8:1); likewise the words are capable of being understood of the power and efficacy of the Spirit of God, in delivering regenerate persons from the dominion and tyranny of sin; and which may be considered as a reason why they

“walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”, (Romans 8:1): “life” may well be ascribed to the Spirit of God, or be called the Spirit of life, because he has life in himself as the Father and Son have; and is the author of life to others, of natural life to all men as creatures, and of spiritual life to the people of God in regeneration; and is a quickening spirit to them afterwards, as he will be to the dead bodies of the saints in the resurrection: by “the law” of the Spirit may be meant, the energy and power of the Spirit in conversion; which work requires power, and a man has no power of himself to effect it; but there is a power in the Spirit, which works irresistibly, though not by any force or compulsion to the will, but it moves upon it sweetly, powerfully, and effectually: and all this may be said to be “in Christ”: the life which the Spirit is the author and giver of, is in Christ as the head of his people, the proper repository of all grace, and the fountain of life; the Spirit himself is in him, both as God and as man, and as Mediator, hence the saints receive him and his gifts and graces from him; and the law of the Spirit, or his power and efficacy in working, is “in” or “by” Christ, through his sufferings and death, and in consequence of his mediation: now this powerful and quickening efficacy of the Spirit delivers regenerate persons from the force and tyranny of sin, called here “the law of sin and death”; a “law of sin”, because it has power and dominion over unregenerate persons, its throne is in the heart of man, and its laws are many and powerful; and “the law of death”, because its reign is tyrannical, barbarous and cruel, it is unto death: and from its governing influence, and tyrannical power, does the Spirit of God free his people in regeneration; not from the being of sin; nor from the rage of it, and disturbance it gives; nor from such power of it, but that they may fall into sin; but so as that sin does not properly reign over them, nor legally, nor universally, or so as to bring a death on their graces, and their persons into condemnation. Once more, those words may be understood of the holiness of Christ’s human nature, as a branch of our justification, and freedom from the guilt of sin, and condemnation by it: for as “the law of sin and death” may design inherent corruption, and the force and power of it in the saints; so the opposite to it, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ”, may mean the purity and holiness of his human nature. That Christ’s human nature is pure and holy is certain, from express texts of Scripture, from its union to the Son of God, from the ends and purposes of its assumption, from the inefficacy of Satan’s temptations, and from the whole

course of his life and conversation; for though he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, was reckoned a sinner by men, was attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though not sinful, had all the sins of his people imputed to him, and endured afflictions, and at last death; yet his nature was pure and untainted: for he did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation; and though made of a woman, yet the flesh he took of her was sanctified by the Holy Ghost; his body was prepared by God, and curiously wrought by the Spirit, from whom his whole human nature received a fulness of habitual holiness: and this may be called “the Spirit of life” in him, because he is a quickening Spirit in regeneration, justification, and the resurrection from the dead; “the law” of it, because the holiness of his nature lies in, arises from, and is conformable to a law that is within him, written on his heart; and because, together with his obedience and death, it has a force, power, and authority, to free from condemnation; for this is not a mere necessary qualification of him to be the Mediator, or what renders his obedience, sacrifice, and intercession, efficacious and valuable, or is merely exemplary to us, but is what is imputed to us, as a part of our justification. The law requires a holy nature of us, we have not one, Christ assumed one for us, and so is the end of the law, or answers the requirement of the law in this respect, as well as in all others: and hence, though sanctification begun in us, does not free us from the being of sin, and all its force and power, yet perfect sanctification in Christ frees from all condemnation by it.

Romans 8:3**For what the law could not do**

This is not to be understood of “the law of the mind”, in opposition to “the law of sin”, which indeed is very feeble and impotent; man had a power originally of obeying the divine commands, but through sin he has lost his strength and power; and even a renewed mind cannot perform what it would, which is owing to the flesh, or corrupt nature; it has strong desires after holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God; but these desires cannot be fulfilled by it, and indeed without Christ it can do no good thing: nor is the ceremonial law intended, though this is weak, and there are many things it could not do; it could not expiate and atone for sin; nor remove the guilt of it, nor cleanse from the filth of it: But the moral law is here designed; this, though it can, and does accuse of sin, can convince of it,

can curse, condemn, and condemn to death for it; yet it could not condemn sin itself, which is only abolished by Christ; it cannot restrain from sin, nor change a sinful nature, nor sanctify an impure heart; nor free from the guilt of sin, nor comfort a distressed mind under a sense of it, it cannot subject persons, or bring them to before God, or give life, or save from death; the reason is,

in that,
or because

it was weak through the flesh.

The weakness of the law is total and universal, it has no strength at all; though not original and natural, but accidental; it is owing to the flesh, or the corrupt nature of man: or rather the weakness is in sinful men, and not in the law; and the sense is this, that human nature is so weakened by sin, that it is incapable of fulfilling the law; the weakness of the law is not from itself, but from man: to this agrees what the Jewish writers F21 say,

“there is not a word in the law “weak”, or broken; wherefore when thou considerest and observest it, that thou dost not find it strong, as an hammer that breaks the rocks, (awh Knym avlx yaw) , “but if weak, it is of thyself”.”

To which may be added that usual saying of theirs, (hrwt hla zwe Nya) , “there is no strength but the law” F23; unless the apostle can be thought to oppose this notion of theirs. Wherefore because of the weakness of the law, or of human nature to fulfil it,

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

The person sending is God, who gave the law weakened by the flesh, against whom we have sinned: and who is righteous, pure, and holy: which considerations enhance his grace and goodness, in the mission of Christ. This must be understood of God the Father, who is here manifestly distinguished from the Son; and who is God, but not solely, or to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and who sent Christ, though not singly, for the “Lord God and his Spirit sent” him, (Isaiah 48:16); though as it is most agreeable for a father to send his son, this is generally ascribed to him; and he being the first person in the Godhead, is the first in order of working, and so in redemption. The person sent is his own Son; not by creation, as angels and men are; nor by adoption, as saints are; nor is he called so, on account of his incarnation, resurrection, or mediatorship, for he

was the Son of God antecedent to either of them; but his own proper Son, and not in any metaphorical sense; a Son of the same nature with him, begotten of him, and his Son in that nature in which he is God. The act of sending, does not suppose inequality of nature; for though he that is sent is not greater, yet as great as he that sends; two equals, by agreement, may send each other; a divine person may assume an office, and under that consideration be sent, without supposing inferiority of nature, as in the case of the Holy Spirit; and an inferiority as to office, is allowed in the case of the Son; God sent his Son under the character of a servant, to do work: nor does this act imply change of place; there is indeed a “terminus a quo”, from whence he was sent, from heaven, from his Father there; and there is a “terminus ad quem”, to which he was sent into this world; but then this coming of his from heaven to earth, was not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; nor was it out of any disrespect to his Son, but out of love to us, that he sent him; nor was he sent against his will; he showed no reluctance at the proposal to him in the council of peace, but the utmost willingness; nor any at his coming into the world: nor at the work itself, which he entered upon, and went through with the greatest eagerness and cheerfulness: nor does it suppose him whilst sent, and here on earth, to be in a state of absence and separation from his Father; he was still in his bosom, yet in heaven, and his Father always with him: but it supposes that he existed before he was sent; that he was a person, and distinct from the Father, or he could not be sent by him; that he had authority from him, considered in his office capacity: in a word, this sending of the Son, designs the manifestation of him in human nature; as appears from the form and manner in which he was sent, “in the likeness of sinful flesh”; which expresses the reality of his incarnation, of his having a true real human nature; for flesh is not to be taken strictly for a part of the body, nor for the whole body only, but for the whole human nature, soul and body; which though it looked like a sinful nature, yet was not sinful: the likeness of it denotes the outward appearance of Christ in it; who was born of a sinful woman; was subject to the infirmities of human nature, which though not sinful, are the effects of sin; was reckoned among transgressors, was traduced as one himself by men, and treated as such by the justice of God; he having all the sins of his people on him, for which he was answerable: “and” hence God, “for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”; not the law, which was weak through the flesh; nor sinners, who broke the law;

but sin itself, the transgression of the law, all kind of sin, and all that is in it the act of condemning it, does not design God’s disapproving of it, and judging it to be evil; this he could not but do, as being contrary to his nature, an act of hostility against him, a breach of his law, and what brings ruin upon his creatures; and this he would have done, if Christ had never suffered in the flesh; and he has taken other methods, both among his own people and the world, to show his dislike of sin: nor does this act intend the destruction of the power and dominion of sin, in regeneration; this is the work of the Spirit, and is done in our flesh, and not in the flesh of Christ; but it is to be understood of the condemnation and punishment of sin, in the person of Christ: sin was laid on him by the Father, and he voluntarily took it upon himself; justice finding it there, charges him with it, demands satisfaction, and condemns him for it; and hereby sin was expiated, the pardon of it procured, and it was, entirely done away: now this is said to be done “for sin”; some join the phrase with the former part of the text, either with the word “sending”, and take the sense to be, that God sent his Son for, or on the account of sin, to take it away, and save his people from it; or “with sinful flesh”, which was taken from a sinful person; but it stands best as it does in our version, and may be rendered “of sin”; for God condemned sin of sin in Christ, that is, by the vengeance he took of it, in the strictness of his justice, through the sufferings of his Son, he showed sin to be exceeding sinful indeed; or rather “by sin”; that is, by an offering for sin, so the word is used in (Hebrews 10:6 Hebrews 10:8) ; and answers to (hajx) , in (Psalms 40:6) , by being made which, sin was condemned “in the flesh” of Christ, who was put to death in the flesh, “for” the sins of his people, and bore all the punishment due unto them: from hence we learn the evil of sin, the strictness of justice, and the grace of the Redeemer.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 Zohar in Lev. fol. 3. 2.

F23 Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 4. 4. & 9. 4.

Romans 8:4

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,

&c.] By the righteousness of the law, is not meant the righteousness of the ceremonial law, though that was fulfilled by Christ; but of the moral law, which requires holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and death in

case of disobedience; active righteousness, or obedience to the precepts of the law, is designed here. This is what the law requires; obedience to the commands of it is properly righteousness; and by Christ’s obedience to it we are made righteous, and this gives the title to eternal life: now this is said to be “fulfilled in us”; this is not fulfilled by us in our own persons, nor can it be; could it, where would be the weakness of the law? man might then be justified by it, and so the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, must be set aside: there never was any mere man that could fulfil it; for obedience to it must not only be performed perfectly, but with intenseness of mind and spirit; a man must be sinless in thought, word, and deed; and this would be to put man upon a level with Adam in a state of innocence, and the angels in heaven: nor is this to be understood of any righteousness inherent in man; internal holiness is never called the righteousness of the law; and could it be thought to be righteousness, yet it can never be reckoned the whole righteousness of the law: and though it is a fruit of Christ’s death, it is the work of the Spirit, and is neither the whole, nor any part of our justification: but this is to be understood of the righteousness of the law fulfilled by Christ, and imputed to us; Christ has fulfilled the whole righteousness of the law, all the requirements of it; this he has done in the room and stead of his people; and is imputed to them, by virtue of a federal union between him and them, he being the head, and they his members; and the law being fulfilled by him, it is reckoned all one as it was fulfilled in, or if by them; and hence they are personally, perfectly, and legally justified; and this is the end of Christ’s being sent, of sin being laid on him, and condemned in him. The descriptive character of the persons, who appear to be interested in this blessing, is the same with that in (Romans 8:1) ,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:

(See Gill on Romans 8:1).

Romans 8:5

For they that are after the flesh

By flesh is meant the corruption of nature; and they may be said to be “after” it, not all that have flesh in them, for the best of saints have it in them; regenerating grace does not remove it from them; there is a difference between being in and after the flesh, and flesh being in us; but such who are as they were born, who have nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in them, in whom that is the governing principle, whose minds are carnal,

and whose whole walk and conversation is, such, are here meant: and these persons

do mind the things of the flesh:

not merely things corporeal, belonging to the welfare of the body; or things natural for the improvement of the mind; or things civil, as riches which may be minded and sought after in a lawful way; but things sinful, the lusts, works, and sins of the flesh: which they may be said to “mind”, since they judge them to be good; the bent and application of their minds are to them; their affections are set upon them; they are solicitously careful to provide for them, and savour and relish them: nor is it to be wondered at, since these are natural to them; they are opposite to God and so agreeable to them; they have no mind, thought, affection, or relish, for anything else; and it is entirely owing to mighty grace, that any mind the things of the Spirit:

but they that are after the Spirit;

not such who follow the dictates of their own spirits; or are outwardly reformed; nor all that have spiritual gifts; or profess themselves to have the grace and Spirit of God; but such who are born again, are renewed in the spirit of their minds, in whom grace is the governing principle: the work of the Spirit is begun in them, though not perfected: the Spirit himself dwells in them, and they walk after him; their minds and conversations are spiritual, though there may be a great deal of carnality in their hearts, thoughts, words, and actions, which is matter of grief unto them: these mind

the things of the Spirit;

the graces of the Spirit; spiritual blessings; the doctrines of the Gospel; spiritual sacrifices and services: these have some understanding of, can discern the difference between them and carnal things, judge and approve of them as right; have a great esteem and affection for them, and taste a sweetness in them. They have no mind naturally to these things; nor is the bias of their minds altered by themselves, nor could it; this is wholly the work of the Spirit of God; and these things are minded only because, and as they are agreeable to the spiritual part, the inward man.

Romans 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death

The phrase the apostle here uses, includes the best part of corrupt man; the mind, the understanding, the judgment, the will, the affections, the thoughts, the

reason, and reasonings of man; and may be rendered, “the wisdom”, or “prudence of the flesh”; so called, to distinguish it from that wisdom which is from above; from that natural and civil wisdom, which is laudable; and it shows that the wisest part of man is but carnal: all sorts of persons destitute of the grace of God are concerned herein; or this is applicable to them all, as the sensualist, the worldling, the proud Pharisee, and the wise disputer of this world. This wisdom of the flesh, or carnal mindedness, “is death”; not that it is conversant about death; or that such persons are thoughtful of it, endeavour to make it familiar to them; or are desirous of it, and esteem it as a privilege; this only spiritually minded men do: but the sense is, that this issues in death; death is not the object, but the end of carnal mindedness; carnal mindedness, so far as it prevails in the saints, brings a death upon them. It is true, indeed, they cannot die a spiritual, or an eternal death; yet sometimes they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; which is frequently owing to their carnality: and the effect of this must needs be death in carnal men; since it alienates from God; it renders them transgressors of the law, and obnoxious to its curse; it sets the soul against, and diverts it from Christ the way of life; and if grace prevent not, must be the cause of, and issue in eternal death; because it is sin and sinful, it is enmity to God, it disqualifies for life, and makes persons fit companions for the heirs of wrath:

but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace;

spiritually minded men are the only living persons in a spiritual sense, for all that are in and after the flesh are dead; and so far as carnal mindedness prevails in professors, there is a deadness in them as to all spiritual exercises; and oftentimes as to outward appearance, there is no difference between them and dead men: but spiritually minded men are evidently living persons; they have a spiritual discerning of spiritual things; they breathe after them, savour and relish them; they talk of spiritual things, and walk in a spiritual manner; they are not only alive, but lively in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and are the means of enlivening others; and their end will be everlasting life; which is certain from the declared will and promise of God, and from the grace of life and Spirit of life which are in them. “Peace” also is another effect of spiritual mindedness; such enjoy peace of conscience: this is a fruit of the Spirit; a part of the kingdom of grace the are

possessed of; and the things their minds are conversant with are productive of it; which is the gift of God, passes all understanding, and is of more worth than all the world: such men are also of peaceable dispositions in commonwealths, in neighbourhoods, in families, and churches; induced thereunto by the noblest arguments; and their end will be peace, which will be perfect and eternal.

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God

These words contain a reason why the issue of carnal mindedness is death; because the carnal mind, the wisdom of the flesh, is not only an enemy, but enmity itself against God: against his being; it reasons against it; it wishes he was not; it forms unworthy notions of him; thinks him such an one as itself; and endeavours to bury him in forgetfulness, and erase out of its mind all memorials of him: it is at enmity against his perfections; either denying his omniscience; or arraigning his justice and faithfulness; or despising his goodness, and abusing his grace and mercy: it finds fault with, and abhors his decrees and purposes; quarrels with his providences; it is implacable against his word and Gospel; especially the particular doctrines of grace, the Father’s grace in election, the Son’s in redemption, and the Spirit’s in regeneration; and has in the utmost contempt the ordinances and people of Christ. This enmity is universal, it is in all men in unregeneracy, either direct or indirect, hidden or more open; it is undeserved; it is natural and deeply rooted in the mind, and irreconcilable without the power and grace of God. It shows itself in an estrangedness from God; in holding friendship with the world, in harbouring the professed enemies of God, in living under the government of sin and Satan; in hating what God loves, and in loving what God hates; in omitting what God commands, and committing what he forbids; it manifests itself in their language, and throughout the whole of their conversations.

For it is not subject to the law of God;

carnal men are subject to the law’s sentence of condemnation, but not to its precepts, by obedience to them; there may be an external, and which is a servile obedience to it, but not a free, voluntary, internal one, and still less a perfect one: the carnal mind is so far from an obedient subjection to the law, that it is far off from the law, and the law from that; it hates and despises it, thwarts and contradicts it in every instance, and,

as much as in it lies, makes it void; which fully proves the enmity of the carnal mind against God; for hereby his being is tacitly denied, his sovereignty disputed, his image defaced, his government withdrawn from, and these persons are declared, and declare themselves enemies to him:

neither indeed can be;

without regenerating grace, without the power and Spirit of God, unless it is written upon the heart by the finger of God; for carnal men are dead in sin, and so without strength to obey the law; and besides, the carnal mind, and the law of God, are directly contrary one to another. Where is man’s power and free will? no wonder the carnal mind do not stoop to the Gospel of Christ, when it is not, and cannot be subject to the law of God. Hence we see the necessity of almighty power, and efficacious grace in conversion. It is Christ’s work to subject men to the law, and which is done when he justifies by his righteousness: agreeably to which the Targum on (Isaiah 53:11) ; paraphrases it thus:

“in his wisdom he shall justify the righteous, that (atyrwal) (לשׁכרה גיאוי) , “he may subject many to the law”.”

And in (Isaiah 53:11) , the transgressors he hath subjected to the law.

Romans 8:8

So then they that are in the flesh

They that are in the flesh are the same who are said to be after it, (Romans 8:5) , and are there described. Such

cannot please God;

men, whilst unregenerate, and as such, cannot please God; for though the persons of God’s elect are wellpleasing to him always, as considered in Christ, in whom they are loved with an everlasting love, and were chosen in him, and all provisions grace and glory made for them in him; yet as considered in themselves, and whilst in the flesh, do not please him; for they are straying from him, are alienated from his life, are destitute of all grace, and particularly faith, without which it is impossible to please him; are filthy and unclean, and hence, whilst such have no enjoyment of him, or communion with him; wherefore he sends his Spirit to work in them that which is wellpleasing in his sight: but this is not to be understood so much of

persons, and their non-acceptableness to God, as of the inability of unregenerate men to obtain the good will of God, or make their peace with him; which they have no inclination to, being enmity against him; and were they inclined to it, know not how to go about it; nor can they draw nigh to God to treat with him about terms of peace; nor can they do that which can procure peace; Christ is the only person that can, make peace, and has done it: or rather, of the impotency of natural men to do anything which pleasing in the sight of God. There are many things which are pleasing to him, such as prayer, praise, giving of alms, keeping his commandments, and walking in his ways; but these unregenerate men cannot do in any acceptable manner to God; for they are without the Spirit, without Christ, without faith; and in all they do have no view to the glory of God: they have neither grace, nor strength, nor right principles, nor right ends.

Romans 8:9

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit

That is, ye are not carnal, but spiritual men; or ye are not in a state of unregeneracy, but in a state of grace: the reason proving this is,

if so be,
or “seeing”

that the Spirit of God dwell in you;

the inhabitation of the Spirit is a distinguishing character of a regenerate man; which is to be understood not of his omnipresence, nor of a participation of his gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary: nor does the Spirit of God only dwell in his people by his graces, but in person as in office, and in a way of special favour; as a spirit of illumination, regeneration, sanctification, and faith, as a comforter, a spirit of adoption, an intercessor, and as a pledge and seal of happiness: which inhabitation is personal; is not peculiar to him to the exclusion of the Father and of the Son; is expressive of property and dominion; is not confined to the souls of men, for he also dwells in their bodies; it is operative, powerful, and perpetual; it is the security of the saints’ perseverance, and the pledge of their resurrection and future glory. This is owing not to any goodness in them, or to any fitness and preparations of theirs to receive him; but to a federal union to Christ and relation to him, to our Lord’s ascension and intercession, and to the love and grace of the Father; and this proves a man

to be a regenerate man, to be in the Spirit, and not in the flesh; for the Spirit of God is never in this sense in an unregenerate man, nor is he in any such sense without his grace; so that the indwelling of the Spirit is the grand evidence of relation to God, of an interest in Christ and union to him, and of a man's state and condition Godward;

now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

By "the Spirit of Christ", is not meant the human soul of Christ; nor his divine nature; nor his Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life; but the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, the same which is called the Spirit before; and proves Christ to be God, he proceeds from him as from the Father, is sent by him, and with which Christ's human nature was fitted and filled. The Jews F24 often speak of (xyvmh xwr) , or (xyvmd axwr) "the spirit of the Messiah". Now to have him is not barely to partake of his gifts, but of his graces; to be possessed of him as one's own; to have communion with him, and to have him dwelling in us. There are some who have him not, nor never will have him, being none of Christ's; and God's elect, whilst in an unregenerate state, are without him; and whilst such, though they are his chosen and adopted ones, they are his by his Father's gift and his own purchase, they are his pardoned ones through his blood, and his justified ones through his righteousness; yet they are not his regenerated, called, and sanctified ones; nor can they claim any interest in him; nor are they known to be his by themselves or others; nor have they any communion with him, or enjoyment of him.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & 107. 3. & 128. 3. Baal Hatturim in Gen. 1, 2. Caphtor, fol. 113. 2.

Romans 8:10

And if Christ be in you

Not as he is in the whole world, and in all his creatures, or circumscriptively, and to the exclusion of himself elsewhere; for his person is above in heaven, his blood is within the vail, his righteousness is upon his people, and his Spirit and grace are in them; and so he comes to be in them, he is formed in their hearts by the Spirit of God in regeneration, when the Father reveals him not only to them, but in them; and he himself enters and takes possession of them as his own, manifests himself to them, communicates his grace, and grants

them communion with him. This being their case,

the body is dead because of sin:

by which is meant, not the body of sin, though this is called a body, and a body of death, yet is not dead, much less is it so by reason of sin; but this fleshly body, because liable to afflictions, which are called deaths, has the seeds of mortality in it, and shall in a little time die, notwithstanding the gift of it to Christ, though it is redeemed by his blood, and united to him; the reason of it is not merely the decree of God, nor does it arise from the original constitution of the body, but sin is the true reason of it, sin original and actual, indwelling sin, but not by way of punishment for it, for Christ has bore that, death is one of the saints' privileges, it is for their good, and therefore desired by them; but that they might be rid of it, and free from all those troubles which are the consequences of it:

but the spirit is life, because of righteousness;

not the Spirit of God, who lives in himself, is the author of life to others, of natural and spiritual life, continues as a principle of life in the saints, is the pledge of everlasting life, and is so to them because of the righteousness of Christ nor grace, or the new creature, which is sometimes called Spirit, and may be said to be life, it lives unto righteousness, and is owing to and supported by the righteousness of the Son of God; but the soul of man is here meant, in opposition to the body, which is of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal; and this may be said in believers to be life or live, for it not only lives naturally, but spiritually; it lives a life of holiness from Christ, a life of faith upon him, and a life of justification by him, and will live eternally; first in a separate state from the body after death, till the resurrection morn, it does not die with the body, nor sleep with it in the grave, nor is it in any "limbus" or state of purgatory, but in paradise, in heaven, in the arms and presence of Christ, where it is not inactive, but employed in the best of service: and after the resurrection it will live with the body in glory for evermore; and this is owing to righteousness, not to the righteousness of man, but the imputed righteousness of Christ; for as it was sin, and loss of righteousness thereby which brought death on man, the righteousness of Christ is that on which believers live now, and is their right and title to eternal life hereafter.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead

These words are not to be understood as they are by some, of the continued work of sanctification in the heart by the Spirit of God; for regeneration, and not sanctification, is signified by quickening, which quickening occurs when the Spirit of God first takes up his dwelling in the soul; besides, the apostle had spoke of the life of the spirit or soul before; and they are mortal bodies, and not its mortal souls, which are said to be quickened, for these cannot mean the body of sin, or the remains of corruption, as they are said to be, and which are never quickened, nor never can be. To understand the words in such a sense, is not so agreeable to the resurrection of Christ here mentioned; whereas Christ's resurrection is often used as an argument of ours, which is designed here, where the apostle argues from the one to the other. The Spirit *dwells* in the saints as his temples: the Spirit that dwells in them is, *the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead* ; by whom is meant God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is here and elsewhere ascribed. This *periphrasis* of him is used, to express the power, justice, and grace of God in the resurrection of his Son; to show that the Spirit of God was concerned in it; and the greatness of the person of the Spirit that dwells in the saints; and what reason they have to believe the sanctification of their souls, and the redemption of their bodies, since such a divine Spirit dwells in them; wherefore, *he that raised up Christ from the dead*, which is the Father, *shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*; not the souls of the saints, for these die not: but their "bodies", called "mortal", because appointed to death, are under the sentence of it, and in which it already works; "your" bodies and not others; mortal ones, and not airy, celestial, immortal ones; the very same they carry about with them here, and in which the Spirit of God had dwelt. These shall be quickened. The Jews frequently express the resurrection by (המתים) , "the quickening of the dead" some distinguish F25 between (hmqwt) "the resurrection" of the dead, which is common to the wicked, and (תחיית) , "the quickening" of them, peculiar to the righteous: though, it is observed, this distinction does not always hold: however, this act of quickening seems here designed to express the peculiar blessing, of the saints; for though the wicked shall be raised from the dead, yet they will not rise with the saints, nor by virtue of union to Christ, nor to an eternal life of joy and happiness; in this sense

the saints only will be quickened, "by the Spirit"; not as an instrument, but as a coefficient cause with the Father and Son: or "because of the Spirit that dwelleth in you", the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are sanctified by him, where he continues to dwell by virtue of union to Christ, and in consequence of it will quicken them at the last day; so the Jews say, that the Holy Ghost brings to the resurrection of the dead F26.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Rabbinic. p. 745, 746.

F26 Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Romans 8:12

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors

The appellation, "brethren", is not used, because they were so by nation or by blood, though many in the church at Rome were Jews; nor merely in a free familiar way of speaking; but rather on account of church membership, and especially because they were in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ: and the use of it by the apostle, shows his great humility and condescension, and his love and affection for them, and is designed to engage their attention and regard to what he was about to say, to them and of them; as that they were "debtors"; which is to be understood of them not as sinners, who as such had been greatly in debt, and had nothing to pay, and were liable to the prison of hell; for no mere creature could ever have paid off their debts; but Christ has done it for them, and in this sense they were not debtors: but they were so as saints, as men freed from condemnation and death; which doctrine of Christian liberty is no licentious one; it does not exempt from obedience, but the more and greater the favours are which such men enjoy, the more obliged they are to be grateful and obey; they are debtors, or trader obligation,

not to the flesh,

to corrupt nature,

to live after the flesh,

the dictates of that; nor should they be, both on God's account, since that is enmity to him, and is not subject to his law; and on their own account, because it is an enemy to them, brings reproach on them, and exposes them to death; but though it is not expressed, it is understood, that they are debtors to God; to God the Father, both as the God of nature, and of grace, as their

covenant God and Father in Christ, who has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him; to Christ himself, who has redeemed them by his blood: and to the Spirit of God who is in them, and for what he has been, is, and will be to them.

Romans 8:13

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die

Such persons are dead, whilst they live, and shall die a second or an eternal death, if grace prevent not. It may be asked, whether one that has received the grace of God in truth, can live after the flesh; flesh, or corrupt nature, though still in such a person, has not the dominion over him: to live in sin, or in a continued course of sinning, is contrary to the grace of God; but flesh may prevail and greatly influence the life and conversation, for a while; how long this may be the case of a true believer, under backslidings, through the power of corruptions and temptations, cannot be known; but certain it is, that it shall not be always thus with him. It may be further inquired, whether such an one may be so left to live after the flesh, as to die and perish eternally; Christ expressly says, such shall not die that live and believe in him; grace, which is implanted in their souls, is an incorruptible and never dying seed; grace and glory are inseparably connected together; but then such persons may die with respect to their frames, their comforts and the lively exercise of grace, which seems to be here intended; as appears from the next clause,

but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

This is not to be understood of the mortification of the body itself; nor does it design any maceration or afflicting of it by any severities of life; nor of the destruction of the body of sin by Christ: or of the being and principles of sin in the saints by the Spirit of Christ; which is contrary to Scripture, to the experience of the saints, who find it in them, alive in them, and to their expectations, whilst in this world: nor is this mortification to be considered as a part of regeneration, which by some divines is made to consist in a sense of sin, grief for it, and hatred of it, in avoiding it, and in an expulsion of vicious habits and inclinations; but it should be observed, that the apostle is writing to persons that were already regenerate; nor does he ever exhort persons to regenerate themselves, which he would do here, if this was the sense; regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God, in which men are passive, whereas in the

mortification here spoken of the saints are active, under the influence of the Spirit of God; besides, regeneration is done at once, and does not admit of degrees; and in and by that, sin, as to its being and principle, is so far from being destroyed, that it seems rather to revive in the sense and apprehension of regenerated persons: but it is a mortification of the outward actings of sin in the conversation, called, “the deeds of the body”: and in the Claromontane exemplar, and in the Vulgate Latin version, “the deeds of the flesh”: or as the Syriac version renders it, (ykpwh) , “the conversations”, or manners of it, and so the Ethiopic version; that is, its outward course of life: and it signifies a subduing and weakening the vigour and power of sin in the lives and conversations of the saints, to which the grace and assistance of the Spirit are absolutely necessary; and such who are enabled to do so, “shall live” comfortably; they shall have communion with Christ here, and shall live a life of glory with him hereafter. Such a way of speaking as this is used by the Jews; say they F1,

“what shall a man do that he may live? it is replied, (wmue) (tymy) , “he shall mortify himself”;

which the gloss explains by “he shall humble himself”; walk humbly before God and men, in his life and conversation.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 32. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 2. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 3.

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God

Not by the spirit of the world, or of the devil, or by their own spirits: the act of leading ascribed to the Spirit is either in allusion to the leading of blind persons, or such who are in the dark; or rather to the leading of children and teaching them to go; which supposes life in those that are led, and some degree of strength, though a good deal of weakness; and is a display of powerful and efficacious grace, and is always for their good: the Spirit of God leads them from sin, and from a dependence on their own righteousness, in paths they formerly knew not, and in which they should go, in the paths of faith and truth, of righteousness and holiness, and in a right, though sometimes a rough way; he leads them to the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to

the fulness of grace in him; into the presence of God, to the house and ordinances of God; into the truths of the Gospel, from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory; which he does gradually, by little and little he leads them to see the iniquity of their hearts and natures, to lay hold on Christ and salvation by him, into the doctrines of grace, and the love and favour of God, and proportionally to the strength he gives: now such persons,

they are the sons of God:

not in so high a sense as Christ is; nor in so low a sense as Adam was, and angels are; much less in such sense as wicked magistrates be; nor merely as professors of religion in common; but by adoption, not national, such as that of the Jews, but special; and which has some agreement with civil adoption, it being of persons to an inheritance, which they have no legal right unto, and it is done freely: though there is a difference between the one and the other; for in divine adoption there is no need on the adopter's side; nor no worth on the side of the adopted; proper qualifications are conveyed to them for the enjoyment of the inheritance, and which is enjoyed, the father and firstborn being living, and is an inheritance which vastly exceeds all others: now this blessing of being the sons of God, is owing not to ourselves, nor to our earthly parents, but to God; to the Father, who predestinated to it, and fixed it in the covenant of grace; to Christ, it is by him, as the Son of God, it is through him, as the Mediator, and it is for him, it is for his glory; and also to the Spirit of God, who manifests it, works faith to receive it, witnesses to it, and seals up to the full enjoyment of it. This favour is an instance of surprising grace, exceeds other blessings, makes the saints honourable, is attended with many privileges, and lasts for ever: such who are in this relation to God, ought to ascribe it to his grace, to require him with thankfulness, and a becoming conversation, to be followers of him, and to love, honour, and obey him.

Romans 8:15

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear

By “the spirit of bondage” is meant, not the Spirit of God: for this is just the reverse of his character, who is a “free Spirit”, or (hbydn xwr) , “a Spirit of liberty”; and is contrary to his work and office, which is to show a soul its state of bondage by nature, and to deliver out of it; and though fear may arise from the convictions of sin,

yet this he removes by discoveries of love; moreover, his work is to make application of grace and righteousness to sensible sinners, and to administer comfort to distressed minds, and make them meet for glory; and it is also contrary to the character of the persons in whom he dwells, who are the sons of God; besides, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of adoption, is in the text itself manifestly opposed to this spirit: but by it is intended a man's own spirit whilst in a state of unregeneracy, and particularly whilst under a work of the law; and it refers to that “pharisaical” spirit which prevailed among the Jews. Men in a state of nature are under a spirit of bondage to the lusts of the flesh; by these they are captivated and enslaved, and the consequence of it is a fearful apprehension, when convicted, of death, judgment, and wrath to come. They are in slavery to the god of this world, who leads them captive, and by injecting into them fears of death, are subject to bondage. The Jews in particular were in bondage to the law, ceremonial and moral; to the ceremonial law, as circumcision, observation of days, and multitudes of sacrifices. This law was an handwriting of ordinances against them; it obliged them to keep the whole moral law; the sacrifices of it could not take away sin; the breach of it, being punishable with death, must unavoidably induce a “spirit of bondage unto fear”: they were in bondage to the moral law, which naturally genders to it, as it demands perfect obedience, but gives no strength to perform; as it shows a man his sin and misery, but not his remedy, as it accuses charges with sin, and curses and condemns for moreover, a spirit of bondage is brought upon persons through it, when they seek for justification and salvation by the works of it, for such obey it with mercenary views, not from love, but fear; and their comforts rise and fall according to their obedience: now these believers, though they had formerly been under such a spirit of bondage, were now delivered from it; nor should they return to it again:

but ye have received the spirit of adoption,

by which is designed not a spirit of charity, or love, or inherent grace: adoption is not owing to inherent grace, or is any part of it: regeneration and adoption differ; adoption makes men the children of God, regeneration makes them appear to be so by giving them the nature of children; adoption is not a work of grace in us, but an act of grace without us, having its complete being in the mind of God; it is antecedent to a work of grace, inherent grace is a consequence of it, though no man

knows, or has the comfort of his adoption, until he believes: rather a filial child like spirit, such a spirit as becomes the children of God is here meant; a spirit of freedom with God, of reverence of him, and of love of him, and of obedience to him; springing from filial affection and without mercenary views; a meek, harmless, and inoffensive spirit. Though it seems best of all to understand by it the Holy Spirit of God, who is distinguished from the spirit of believers, (Romans 8:16) , and is called “the Spirit of his Son” in a parallel place, (Galatians 4:6) , and stands opposed here to a spirit of bondage, and may be so called because as a spirit of grace he flows from adoption; and is the discoverer, applier, witness, and ratifier of the blessing of adoption; and is the pledge, earnest, or seal of the future adoption or eternal inheritance: now the Spirit is received as such from the Father and the Son into the hearts of believers, by the means of the Gospel, in order to make known their adoption to them, which is an instance of grace, and ought to be acknowledged; for

we cry Abba, Father:

by the help of the spirit of adoption; we, the saints under the Gospel dispensation, in opposition to the legal one, under which they had not that freedom; “cry” which denotes an internal vehemency and affection of soul, and an outward calling upon God, as a Father, with confidence; “Abba, Father, Father” is the explanation of the word “Abba”, and which is added for explanation sake, and to express the vehemency of the affection, and the freedom and liberty which belongs to children: the words in the original are, the one a Syriac word in use with the Jews, the other a Greek one, and denotes that there is but one Father of Jews and Gentiles. The word “Abba” signifies “my Father”, and is expressive of interest and of faith in it; and read backwards is the same as forwards, God is the Father of his people in adversity as well as prosperity; it is the word used by Christ himself in prayer, and which he directs his people to; to say no more, it is a word which the Jews did not allow servants, only freemen to make use of, and to be called by;

“it is a tradition; (say they F2,) that servants and handmaids, they do not use to call (tynwlp amyaw ynwlp aba) , “father such-a-one, or mother such-a-one”;

in allusion to which the apostle suggests, that only freemen, such as have the spirit of adoption, and not servants or bondsmen, can make use of this word

“Abba”, or call God their Father.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 T. Hieros. Niddah, fol. 492. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Massecheth Senachot, c. 1. sect. 13. Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 4. sect. 5.

Romans 8:16

The Spirit itself beareth witness

The thing which the Spirit of God witnesses to is,

that we are the sons of God;

which supposes the case in some sense doubtful and uncertain, at least that it is called in question; not by others, though it sometimes is, as by Satan, which need not seem strange, since he called in question the sonship of Christ himself, and by the world who know them not, and by good men, till better informed: but the testimony of the Spirit is not the satisfaction of others, but the saints themselves; who are ready to doubt of it at times, because of the greatness of the favour, and their own sinfulness and unworthiness; especially after backslidings; through the temptations of the devil, and because of their many trials and afflictions. Now this witness of the Spirit is to establish and confirm it; not to make the thing itself surer, for that stands on the sure foundation of predestination, on the unalterable covenant of grace, on union to Christ; redemption by him, the gift of Christ, and continuance of the Spirit; but to assure them of it, and of their interest in it; for the testimony is given “to our spirits”; so the words are read by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and by the Vulgate Latin; which reading seems better than

with our spirits;

for our own spirits are no witnesses to ourselves: the Father and Son are co-witnesses of the Spirit, but not our own spirits; the spirits of the saints are they which receive the witness of the Spirit of God, to which it is made; not to their ears, for it is not an audible testimony; but to their hearts, it is internal; to their renewed souls, where faith is wrought to receive it; to their understandings, that they may know and be assured of it; to their spirits, which are apt to faint and doubt about it. Now it is “the Spirit itself” that bears this witness, and not others, or by others, but he himself in person; who is a divine witness, whose testimony therefore must be greater than others, and a faithful one, who will never deceive; for he witnesses what he knows, and what is sure and certain: his very being and habitation in the saints are witnesses

and proofs of their adoption; his powerful operations and divine landings persuade to a belief of the truth of it; and by shedding abroad the Father’s love in the heart, and by the application of Gospel promises, he causes and encourages them to “cry Abba”, Father; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension and grace.

Romans 8:17

And if children, then heirs

Children, whether natural or adopted, are heirs to their parents, and according to the Roman laws, which some think the apostle here respects, whether male or female; but according to the Jewish laws F3, females did not inherit only in case of want of male issue; for though Job’s daughters inherited with his sons, this was a peculiar case; and the Jewish writers say F4, it was יריבני (מחורב חשיבתו) , “on account of their worth and beauty”; yet adopted children among them, whether male or female, were equal to natural children in possessing the inheritance; however, the apostle includes both here, who are all one in Christ Jesus, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and so

heirs of God:

either efficiently, he makes them heirs; they are not so by nature, nor do they become such by the works of the law; but God his rich grace adopts them into his family, begets them again, and freely bestows the inheritance on them: or subjectively, they are heirs of himself; he not only makes them his heirs, but he himself is their inheritance and portion; they are heirs of all things which are his; they share in his love, grace, and mercy; and his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness, and indeed, every perfection of his are engaged on their side, and in their favour; all things are theirs who have God to be their God and Father; the Gospel and the ministers of it are theirs; the world and the things of it, life and death, things present and things to come; heaven and happiness, which go by the names of glory, riches of glory, kingdom, eternal life and salvation, are all represented as things to be inherited by the saints. The Jews speak of God’s inheriting of man, as the highest pitch of greatness man can arrive unto; thus explaining and paraphrasing on the names of the places from which the Israelites journeyed, (Numbers 21:18 Numbers 21:19) , say F5,

“when a man makes himself as a wilderness, which is common to all, the law is given

to him by gift, as it is said, “and from the wilderness to Mattanah”: and when it is given to him by gift, (la wlhn) , “God inherits him”, as it is said, “and from Mattanah to Nahaliel”; the gloss upon it is, the law becomes to him (hlxn wmk) , “as an inheritance”; and when אל שנהלו , “God inherits him”, he ascends to his greatness, i.e. to the highest pitch of it, as it is said, from “Nahaliel to Bamot”;

for when a man is worthy of this, as one of their commentators F6 on this place observes, he is called, “the inheritance of God”, according to (Deuteronomy 32:9) ; but our apostle speaks not of the saints as God’s inheritance, which to be sure they are, but of God as theirs; and not of their inheriting the law, but God himself, which is certainly the highest pitch of honour and greatness that men can possibly enjoy. It is added,

and joint heirs with Christ:

it is through him they are heirs of God and of glory; and with him will they partake of and enjoy the inheritance, which is secured to them by their being co-heirs with him: nor does this at all derogate from the honour of Christ, as heir of all things, since he is the firstborn among many brethren, and in this, as in all things, he has the pre-eminence. But before the saints enjoy the inheritance with Christ they must expect to suffer with him and for him; though in the issue they may be assured of this, that they shall be glorified together; their sufferings lie in the way to glory, and glory is and will be the end of their sufferings:

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together:

Christ and his people being one, he the head, and they the members, suffer together; when he suffered, they suffered with him and in him, as their head and representative; and they partake of the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings; and they also suffer afflictions, many of them at least of the same kind with Christ, only with these differences; his were penal evils, theirs not; his were attended with a vast sense of wrath and terror, theirs oftentimes with, joy and comfort; his were meritorious, not so theirs. Moreover, many of their sufferings are for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; on the other hand, by reason of that union which is between Christ and believers, he suffers with them, he reckons their afflictions his, and sympathizes with them; and the consideration of this greatly animates and encourages

them in their sufferings, and especially when they observe that they shall be “glorified together”; not with his essential glory, nor with his mediatorial glory, but with that glory which his Father has given him for them. There is a glorification of the saints in Christ, and a glorification of them by Christ, and a glorification of them with Christ, which will consist in likeness to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 1.

F4 Jarchi in Job xlii. 15.

F5 T, Bab. Nedarim, fol. 55. 1.

F6 En Yaacob, fol. 22. 1.

Romans 8:18

For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time,

&c.] By “this present time” may be meant, the then present age, in which the apostle lived; which was an age in which the people of God suffered much, as was foretold by Christ, and which was necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel; for grace and strength answerable to their trials were given them; and the power of God was visibly to be seen in the supporting of them; though this was not the only suffering age: wherefore by the present time may be understood, the present time of life here on earth; which is a time of suffering, and which cannot well be otherwise, considering the world in which we are, and the nature of it, the state and condition of our souls, and the constitution of our bodies, and the many enemies we have about us; but then this present time of life is the only suffering time to the saints, for no sooner are they removed from hence, but they are in heaven, where neither wicked men nor devils can reach them, where their souls are freed from sin and unbelief, from doubts and fears, and everything that is distressing; and after the resurrection there will be no more diseases nor death in their bodies; and this present time is but a short time, a little while, and all sufferings will be at an end; wherefore they

are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

The future happiness of the saints is expressed by glory, of which the glory of this world is but a faint resemblance; a glory which is already given to Christ, and he is entered into the possession of; it is already, but as yet it is unseen, but will be “revealed” hereafter, when

Christ himself shall appear in it; and it will not only be revealed to the saints, as the glory of Christ, as Mediator; and it will not only be visible upon them, upon their bodies, which will be made like to the glorious body of Christ; but it will be revealed in them, and greatly lie in the perfection of knowledge and holiness in their souls: now between the sufferings of the saints in the present state of things and their future happiness, is no comparison, either with respect to quality or quantity. Their afflictions are “light” in comparison of the due desert of sin, the sufferings of Christ, and the torments of the damned in hell, and when under divine supports; but glory is heavy, it is a “weight of glory”. The sufferings of the saints are but for a time, but their glory is eternal; nor is there any comparison to be made between them by way of merit, for there is no manner of proportion between the one and the other, nor can the one have any causal influence upon the other. This is the judgment of things the apostle made, “I reckon” or “I think” which is said, not as his bare opinion, or as in the least doubting the truth of what he said; but having deliberately weighed things in his mind, and reasoned upon them, came to this conclusion, that so it must be. The allusion is either to logicians, who having settled the premises draw the conclusion; or to arithmeticians, who, having cast up the account, give the sum total. Though, after all, the “glory” here spoken of may mean the glorious Gospel of Christ, which was more and more to be revealed in the Gentile world, “in” or “by us” the apostles, in comparison of which all their sufferings were as nothing.

Romans 8:19

For the earnest expectation of the creature

Some by the creature understand the universe, all created beings animate and inanimate, which having suffered much by the sin of man, are introduced by a rhetorical figure, as waiting for deliverance and a restoration to their paradisiacal estate; but some part of the world is manifestly distinguished from them, (Romans 8:23) , others think that angels are here meant, who being obliged to minister to sinful men, are represented as groaning and longing for the time when all the children of God shall be brought in, that they may be dismissed from their service; but what is said of subjection to vanity, of the bondage of corruption, and of their groaning and travailing in pain, can never agree with such happy spirits: others suppose that men in

general are designed, being by sin brought into a state of bondage and corruption, subjected to vanity, attended with troubles, and liable to death, and so groan under their present miseries for deliverance; but to desire anything of a spiritual nature cannot be ascribed to men in general; and besides, as before observed, some persons are distinguished from them, (Romans 8:23) , others have been of opinion, that the new creature, or renewed persons, are here intended, who being burdened with indwelling sin, groan under it, long for deliverance from it, and are waiting for the heavenly glory; but these cannot be said to be in a state of bondage to corruption, for they are freed from the dominion of sin, and are become the servants of righteousness. It is best of all by “the creature” to understand the Gentile world. “The creature” here, and “the whole creation”, (Romans 8:22) , must be the same; now the phrase (pasa ktisiv) , “the whole creation”, or “every creature”, as it may be rendered, signifies the nations of the world, in distinction to the Jews; see (Mark 16:15) (Colossians 1:23) ; compared with (Matthew 28:19) and answers to (twyrb) , “the creatures”; by which name the Jews often in their writings call the Gentiles, to distinguish them from the Israelites. Take two or three instances, as follow,

“let your commerce (say they F7) be in a peaceable manner, (פּ הבריות) , “with the creatures”; what do “the creatures” say concerning him? such an one, blessed be his father who taught him the law, blessed be his master who taught him the law; woe (twyrb) Mhl) , “to the creatures”, because they learn not the law; such an one who hath learned the law, they observe how beautiful are his ways, and how well ordered his works; of him it is written, saying, “and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified”, (Isaiah 49:3) ;”

where the creatures and the Israelites are evidently distinguished from one another: again F8,

“woe (להם לבריות) , “to the creatures”, who know not, nor have they any regard for the service of their Creator; for it is a tradition, (says R. Isaac,) that “Bath Kol”, or a voice, goes out every day from Mount Horeb, and says, woe (לבריות) , “to the creatures”, because of the service of their Creator.”

And a little after,

“if (הבריות) , “the creatures”, knew the love with which the holy blessed God loves Israel, they would roar like young lions to follow after him.”

Once more F9,

“all the prayer (של הבריות) , “of the creatures”, is only for the earth; Lord let the earth be fruitful, Lord let the earth prosper; all the prayer (של ישראל) , “of the Israelites”, is only for the house of the Lord, Lord let the house of the sanctuary be built.”

Now what “the creature”, the Gentile world, is represented as earnestly waiting, and wistly looking out for, is

the manifestation of the sons of God;

which is made first at their conversion, and afterwards openly and more fully at the appearance of Christ in the resurrection morn. There is a manifestation of the sons of God, at conversion. They that are the sons of God, are his sons before by divine predestination, and through the covenant of grace; as such they were given to Christ; and under this character, and as standing in this relation, he assumed their nature, and died for them, in order to gather them together; and indeed, this previous relation is the ground and foundation of the Spirit of Christ being sent down into their hearts, to manifest their adoption to them; for before conversion, it is not manifested, neither to themselves nor others, but then it is in some measure made known. This may in a particular manner be applied to the Gentiles, and God’s elect among them. They were the sons of God before they were manifested as such; they are spoken of in prophecy as in that relation; see (Isaiah 45:11) ; and seemed to be designed chiefly, if not altogether, by “the children of God scattered abroad”, in (John 11:51 John 11:52) . These were not known, nor looked upon by the Jews, to be the children of God; but when the Gospel came in among them, as the power of God, it manifested them to be such: so that where it was formerly said, “ye are not my people”, there it is said, “ye are the sons of the living God”, (Hosea 1:10) . But the full manifestation of the sons of God will be in their glorification at Christ’s second coming; when they shall be openly taken into God’s family, and shall be owned by Christ in this relation, before angels and men; they will appear in themselves otherwise than now they do; they will be put into the possession of the inheritance they are adopted to, and will have that honour and dignity which belong

to their character actually conferred on them; so that they shall appear, not only to themselves, but to all the world, to be what they are: now this, in the whole compass of it, the Gentiles might be said to be in earnest expectation of, and waiting for. They may be said, in some sense, to expect and wait for the manifestation of the Son of God himself, the Messiah, who is called “the desire of all nations”, (Haggai 2:7) : for it was promised, that “to him should the gathering”, (Genesis 49:10) , or, as some read it, “the expectation of the people”, or “nations be”: they also waited for his law, his doctrine, the everlasting Gospel, (Isaiah 42:4) , and when that was come among them, and became the power of God to the salvation of many of them, this raised in them an earnest expectation of many, of multitudes of the sons of God being manifested among them, according to several prophecies of the Old Testament, which largely speak of this matter; and they continue to wait for the bringing in of the fulness of them in the latter day, and for the ultimate glory, which all the sons of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, shall enjoy together.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 F. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1.

F8 Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 3.

F9 Bareshit Rabba Parash. 13. fol. 11. 3.

Romans 8:20

For the creature was made subject to vanity

This designs the vanity and emptiness of the minds of the Gentiles, who were without God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, without the law and Gospel, and grace of God; also the vain conceits they had of themselves, of their wisdom, knowledge, learning, and eloquence; likewise their vain philosophy, particularly their gross idolatry, their polytheism, or worshipping of many gods; together with their divers lusts and vices, to which they were addicted, to such a degree, that they might be truly said to be made subject thereunto, being under the government of these things, slaves unto them, and in such subjection, as that they could not deliver themselves from it; though it is said,

not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

Though they were willingly vain, yet they were not willingly made subject to vanity; they willingly went into idolatrous and other evil practices, but the devil made them subject, or slaves unto them; he led them

captive at his will, and powerfully worked in them, by divine permission, so that they became vassals to him, and to their lusts; for he seems to be designed, “by him who hath subjected the same”, and not Adam, by whom sin entered into the world.

Romans 8:21

Because the creature itself also

The phrase in hope, which stands in our version, at the end of the preceding verse, should be placed in the beginning of this, and be read in connection with (Romans 8:19 Romans 8:20) being a parenthesis, thus: “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption”; and so it is placed in some copies, and in the Syriac version: that is, “the Gentiles” earnestly wait and expect a larger number of converts among them, in hopes that ere long the whole Gentile world will be freed from

the bondage of corruption, under which it at present groaned;

by which is meant, the bondage they were in, not only to their sinful lusts, but to Satan the god of this world; and particularly to their idols, by which they corrupted themselves, and to which they were enslaved: they hope for a deliverance from hence,

into the glorious liberty of the children of God;

which designs either the liberty of grace the children of God have here; and which consists in a freedom from the dominion of sin and Satan, from the law and bondage of it, in the free use of Gospel ordinances, in liberty of access to God, and a freedom from the fear of death, and a glorious liberty it is; or the liberty of glory the saints shall enjoy in the other world, which will lie in a freedom from the prison of the flesh, from the body of sin and death, from all sorrows and afflictions, from all reproaches and persecutions, from the temptations of Satan, from doubts, fears, and unbelief, and in the full vision of God through Christ, and in a free conversation with angels and saints.

Romans 8:22

For we know that the whole creation groaneth

As a woman with child, ready to bring forth: for it is added,

and travaileth in pain together until now;

regeneration is owing to the grace of God, which is compared to “seed”, of which men are born again; the means of conveying it is the Gospel, and ministers are the instruments of begetting souls to Christ, and who travail in birth till Christ be formed in them: now the Gospel being carried by the apostles into the Gentile world, and being succeeded there, it was like a woman big with child, ready to bring forth many sons to God; for as it was prophesied, so it came to pass, that “more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife”, (Isaiah 54:1) ; and these births were attended with pain. The apostles preached the word with much contention, and the Gentiles received it in much affliction, though with the joy of the Holy Ghost; as a woman rejoices when a man child is brought forth, though the birth has been attended with pain and labour. This was an united groan, and travail of all the converted Gentiles in the several parts of the world, together with the ministers of the Gospel, earnestly desiring more instances of conversion among them; and this vehement desire had appeared “until now”, from the first time of the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to the writing of this epistle; and supposes, that though there were many spiritual births, there were more to come; as there has been, and will be more abundantly, in the latter day: and moreover, this painful labour, and these united groans for spiritual births, the apostles were well acquainted with, and therefore could say, “we know” by their preaching among them, in whom they could easily observe, and do in their writings take notice, how eagerly desirous they were of having the Gospel preached unto them.

Romans 8:23

And not only they, but ourselves also

Not only they Gentiles, but we Jews likewise:

which have the firstfruits of the Spirit:

meaning either the apostles, who were all Jews, and who most of them received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit on the day of “Pentecost”, which was the day of the firstfruits, (Numbers 28:26) ; and to which there seems to be an allusion here; or else the Jewish converts in general: to the Jews the promises of the Messiah were made; to them he first came; the Gospel was first preached unto them, and some of them first believed in Christ; they had the grace of God communicated to them in conversion, which they received as the firstfruits, with respect to an after increase; or in regard

to glory, like the firstfruits, grace is of the same kind with glory, and is a pledge and earnest of it; saints judge by grace the firstfruits, what glory is, and therefore long after it; now of these persons thus described it is said,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves;

their groans were inward from their hearts, not hypocritical or were among themselves, common to them all; and that not merely on their own account, the corruptions of their hearts, the sufferings they endured for the sake of the Gospel, and in a longing expectation for the heavenly glory, but also for the conversion of the Gentiles, for which they incessantly laboured, and prayed night and day;

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Adoption is explained by the redemption of the body; and by the one may be known what the other means: by “the redemption of our body” is not meant the redemption of God’s elect, body and soul, by the blood and death of Christ, which was already finished; and which the saints, who had received the firstfruits, were partakers of in themselves, and therefore could not be said to be waiting for it: but it designs either the redemption of the natural body, by the resurrection from the dead; when the bodies of the saints will be delivered from that mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour, under which they lie in the grave; when they will be refined and spiritualized, and freed from everything which makes them an incumbrance, and an uneasiness to their souls or spirits now; or else the redemption of the mystical body the church, of which the Gentiles make a considerable part, and is to be understood of a deliverance of the church, from the distresses and persecutions it then laboured under; or rather of a making up of the body, the church, by a redemption or deliverance of that part of it, which lay among the Gentiles, from that vanity and bondage of corruption, to which it was subject, into the manifestation and glorious liberty of the sons of God: and then by “adoption” is meant, the special grace of adoption, manifested to the Gentiles in their effectual calling; which the Jews who had received the firstfruits of the Spirit were waiting for, and had good reason to expect, from many prophecies in the writings of the Old Testament; and to which they were the more encouraged, by many appearances of the grace and power of God, attending the ministry of the Gospel among them; and which adoption will be more fully

manifested in the resurrection morn; wherefore also the inheritance, which the whole mystical body the church will then enter upon the possession of, may well be called “the adoption”, because the saints are adopted to it; adoption gives them the title to it, none but adopted ones will enjoy it; and their enjoyment of it will be the full manifestation and completion of the grace of adoption; this saints are waiting for, both for themselves and others, and it is worth waiting for; for it is “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens”, (1 Peter 1:4) : and there is good ground to wait for it; it is a bequest of their heavenly Father, who has adopted them; it is a gift of his free grace; it is already in the hands of Christ, with whom they are co-heirs; and they have already the Spirit, as the earnest of it.

Romans 8:24

For we are saved by hope

We who have received the firstfruits, who were in a lost perishing condition, and by nature no better than others, than the Gentiles, are saved by sin and wrath to come by Christ, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation. They were already saved in the preparations and purposes of God; in the covenant of grace; in the arms and hands of Christ, through his purchase; and as considered in him; and with respect to the inchoation and application of salvation, in effectual calling, and their right unto it by the righteousness of Christ; and with regard to the certainty of it, in faith and hope: the manner in which they are said to be saved, is “by”, or “in hope”; not that hope is the cause of salvation, but the means by which souls are brought to the enjoyment of it; salvation, or glory, is the object of it:

but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?

in the former clause, “hope” signifies the grace itself, but here the object of it; which is represented as unseen, not yet fully enjoyed, something future, and to be hoped for; as the resurrection of the dead, which is the object of hope, and is unseen, and even incredible to carnal reason, and is to come, and good foundation there is in divine revelation, to hope for it; and the hope of it is of great use to the saints, whilst in this world of trouble: eternal glory and happiness is also the object of the hope of believers; it is said to be the hope of their calling, which they are called by grace to; the hope of righteousness, which the righteousness of Christ is the

ground and foundation of; and that blessed hope, the sum of their happiness; and hope laid up for them in heaven, where it is safe and secure; all which is unseen, and yet to come; but good reason there is to hope for it, since the Scriptures of truth so clearly express it; and the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, lay such a solid foundation for hope of it: the Alexandrian copy reads, “why doth he yet wait for?” and so the Ethiopic version, with which agrees the Syriac version, reading the whole, “for [if] we see it, why should we wait for it?”

Romans 8:25

But if we hope for that we see not

Whether it be the hour of death, or the second coming of Christ, or the resurrection of the dead, and eternal glory; all which are unseen by us, and to be hoped for:

then do we with patience wait for it;

as that which is certain and real, as something valuable, which will be satisfying, and be received with the utmost joy. This supposes, that the persons who wait for it believe it, and their interest in it, at least hope they have one; that they have a valuable esteem and affection for it; that they are not in a state of perfection and happiness; and that they sit loose by the things of this world, and are ready to part with the one, and grasp the other: the manner of their waiting is “with patience”; a grace, of which God is the efficient, Christ is the exemplar, and the word the means; and which is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, under the reproaches and persecutions of men, under desertions and want of answers in prayer, under the temptations of Satan, and in the expectation of the heavenly glory.

Romans 8:26

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities

The Spirit of God which dwells in us, by whom we are led, who is the spirit of adoption to us, who has witnessed to our spirits, that we are the children of God, whose firstfruits we have received, over and above, and besides what he has done for us, “also helpeth our infirmities”; whilst we are groaning within ourselves, both for ourselves and for others, and are waiting patiently for what we are hoping for. The people of God, all of them, more or less, have their infirmities in this life. They are not indeed weak and infirm, in such sense as unregenerate persons are, who have no spiritual strength, are ignorant of their weakness, do not go to

Christ for strength, nor derive any from him, and hence can perform nothing that is spiritually good: nor are they all alike infirm; some are weaker in faith, knowledge, and experience, than others; some are of more weak and scrupulous consciences than others be: some are more easily drawn aside through corruption and temptation than others are; some have weaker gifts, particularly in prayer, than others have, yet all have their infirmities; not only bodily afflictions, persecutions of men, and temptations of Satan, but internal corruptions, and weakness to oppose them, and to discharge their duty to God and man; and also have their infirmities in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of the work of prayer; though they are not left to sink under them, but are helped by “the Spirit”: by whom is meant, not any tutelar angel, or the human soul, or the gift of the Spirit in prayer, but the Holy Spirit of God himself; who, as the word here used signifies, “helps together”, with hope and patience, graces which he has implanted, and which he invigorates and draws forth into act and exercise; or with the saints labouring under their burdens; or with the Father and the Son, who also are helpers of the saints: and this helping of them implies, that their infirmities and burdens are such as they must sink under, unless they are helped; and which is done by the Spirit, by bringing to remembrance, and applying the precious promises of the Gospel, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by acting the part of a comforter to them, by putting strength into them, and by assisting them in prayer to God:

for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.

The children of God are not ignorant of the object of prayer, that it is God, and not a creature, God, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, God in the persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit, and with a view to his glorious perfections: nor of the way of coming to God in prayer, through Christ; nor of the manner of performing it in faith, with fervency, sincerity, reverence, humility, and submission; nor who they should pray for, for themselves, for all men, even enemies, particularly for the saints, and ministers of the Gospel; nor of many other things respecting prayer, as that it is both their duty and privilege; their own inability, and the need of the assistance of the Spirit in it; but what they are ignorant of is chiefly the matter of prayer: indeed the whole Bible is an instruction in general to this work, so is the prayer Christ taught his

disciples, and the several prayers of saints recorded in the Scriptures; the promises of God, and their own wants and necessities, may, and do, greatly direct them; as for instance, when under a sense of sin, to pray for a discovery of pardoning grace; when under darkness and desertions, for the light of God’s countenance; when under a sense of weakness of grace, and the strength of corruptions, for fresh supplies of grace and strength, for communion with God in ordinances, for more grace here, and glory hereafter; but what of all things they seem to be, at least at some times, at a loss about, is what to pray for with respect to things temporal, such as riches, honour, friends to have present afflictions removed, or temptations cease; and too often it is, that they pray with greater importunity for lesser things, than for things of more importance; and more from an intemperate zeal, and with a view to self, than for the glory of God:

but the Spirit itself maketh intercession, for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;

not the spirit of a man; or the gift of the Spirit in man; or a man endued with an extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but the Holy Ghost himself, who makes intercession for the saints: not in such sense as Christ does; for he intercedes not with the Father, but with them, with their spirits; not in heaven, but in their hearts; and not for sinners, but for saints: nor in the manner as Christ does, not by vocal prayer, as he when on earth; nor by being the medium, or way of access to God; nor by presenting the prayers of saints, and the blood and sacrifice of Christ to God, as Christ does in heaven; nor as the saints make intercession for one another, and for other persons: but he intercedes for them, by making them to intercede; he indites their prayers for them, not in a book, but in their hearts; he shows them their need, what their wants are; he stirs them up to prayer, he supplies them with arguments, puts words into their mouths, enlarges their hearts, gives strength of faith in prayer, and all the ardour and fervency of it; he enables them to come to God as their Father; and gives them liberty and boldness in his presence, which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy: and this intercession he makes, “with groanings which, cannot be uttered”; not that the Spirit of God groans, but he stirs up groans in the saints; which suppose a burden on them, and their sense of it: and these are said to be “unutterable”; saints,

under his influence, praying silently, without a voice, as Moses and Hannah did, (1 Samuel 1:13) , and yet most ardently and fervently; or as not being able to express fully what they conceive in their minds, how great their burdens are, and their sense of their wants.

Romans 8:27

And he that searcheth the hearts

This is peculiar to God, and a “periphrasis” of him; angels, neither good nor bad, can search into the hearts of men; one man cannot know the heart of another, nor any man fully know his own; this is the prerogative of God: and

he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit;

not the spirit of men, but of God: that affectionate desire and meaning of the Spirit of God, in the unalterable groans of the saints; he knows the wise meaning there is in them, for so (fronhma) may signify, and is opposed to the carnal mind, or wisdom of the flesh, which desires foolish things. The searcher of hearts knows this, not barely by his omniscience, but he regards it, approves of it, attends, and gives an answer to it; which is no small encouragement to pray, though it be but with sighs and groans unutterable; since the omniscient God understands, and respects such kind of prayer: and the reason is,

because he,
the Spirit of God,

maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God;

the persons for whom he intercedes are saints: to whom Christ is made sanctification; who are called to be saints; are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and walk after him: now such are the objects of God’s delight, they are chosen by him, preserved in Christ, and have his righteousness imputed to them; to these he has made known his Gospel, has given his grace, and will at last the inheritance; so that intercession made for such will certainly be regarded: it may be rendered, “he maketh intercession for holy things according to God”; for spiritual blessings, divine favours, things that belong to God; or divine things, which are agreeably to his nature and will: and since it is the Holy Spirit that makes intercession, and the persons are holy for whom he makes it, and this is made for holy things, and all according to the will of God, which the Spirit of God must fully know, saints may be confident of the

prevalence and success of such intercession.

Roman 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good

There is a temporal good, and a spiritual good, and an eternal one. Temporal good is what the men of the world are seeking after, and generally have the greatest share of, and the saints the least; and yet they have as much as is needful for them, and what they have, they have with a blessing; and even sometimes afflictions work for the temporal good of God’s children: spiritual good lies in a lively exercise of grace and a conformity of the soul to God; and is what the men of the world least regard, and the saints most; and sometimes afflictions issue in this sort of good, as they do also in eternal good, for they work for us an exceeding weight of glory: by “all things” may be meant, all beings good and bad: all good beings eternal or created: eternal, as Jehovah the Father, all his perfections, purposes, promises, provisions, and performances; Jehovah the Son, as the mighty God, and as Mediator, all that he is in himself, all that he has in himself, all that he has done, or is doing, all his titles, characters, and relations; Jehovah the Spirit, in his person, offices, and operations; these all have worked together in the council of peace, in the covenant of grace, and in redemption; and they do work together in sanctification, and so they will in glorification, and that for the good of the saints: all created ones, as good angels, good magistrates, good ministers of the Gospel: all evil beings, as devils, persecuting magistrates, heretics, and false teachers: all things, good and bad: all good things, outward peace and prosperity, external gifts, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, church censures, admonitions, and excommunications; all evil things, sin the evil of evils: original sin, or the fall of Adam, which contains all other sins in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences, yet has been overruled for good; hereby a Saviour became necessary, who was sent, came, and wrought out salvation; has brought in a better righteousness than Adam lost; entitled his people to a better life than his was, and makes them partakers of the riches both of grace and glory: actual sin, inward or outward; indwelling sin; which is made use of, when discovered, to abate pride, to lead to an entire dependence on Christ, to teach saints to be less censorious, to depend on the power and grace of God

to keep them, and to wean them from this world, and to make them desirous of another, where they shall be free from it; outward sins, of others, or their own; the sins of others, of wicked men, which observed, raise an indignation in the saints against sin, and a concern for God’s glory, and to look into their own hearts and ways, and admire the grace of God to them, that this is not their case; of good men, which are recorded, and may be observed, not for example and encouragement in sin, but for admonition, and to encourage faith and hope under a sense of it; of their own, for humiliation, which issues in weakening the power of sin in themselves, and the strengthening of the graces of others: but from all this it does not follow, that God is the author of sin, only that he overrules it to wise and gracious purposes; nor should any take encouragement to sin, to do evil that good may come; nor is sin itself a real good; nor is it to be said that it does no hurt; for though it cannot hinder the everlasting salvation of God’s people, it does a great deal of hurt to their peace and comfort; and that it is made to work in any form or shape for good, is not owing to its own nature and influence, which is malignant enough, but to the unbounded power and unsearchable wisdom of God: all evils or afflictions, spiritual and temporal, work together for good; all spiritual ones, such as the temptations of Satan, which are made useful for humiliation, for the trial of grace, to show us our weakness, our need of Christ, and to conform us to him, and also to excite to prayer and watchfulness; the hidings of God’s face, which make his presence the more prized when enjoyed, and the more desirable. Temporal afflictions, afflictions in body, name, or estate, nay even death itself, all work together for the good of God’s people. The Jews tell us of one Nahum, the man Gamzu, who, they say, was F11 so called, because of everything that happened to him he used to say, לטובה (גמ זו) , “Gam zu letobah”, “this is also for good”: and they give instances of several misfortunes which befell him, upon which account he used these words, and how they proved in the issue to his advantage: agreeably to this is the advice given by them,

“for ever (say they F12) let a man be used to say, all that the Lord does, (dybe bjl) , “he does for good”.”

Now that all things do work together for good, the saints “know”, and are firmly persuaded of; both from the word and promises of God, and from the instances of Jacob, Joseph, Job, and others, and also from their own

experience: and it is to be observed, that it is not said that all things “have” worked together, and so they may again, or that they “shall” work together, but all things work together for good; they “now” work together, they are always working together, whether it can be observed or not: prosperity and adversity, whether in things temporal or spiritual, work “together”, and make an intricate woven work in providence and grace; which will be viewed with admiration another day: one copy reads, “God works together”, or “causes all things to work together for good”; and so the Ethiopic version, “we know that God helps them that love him, to every good thing”: and to this agrees the Syriac version, “we know that to them that love God, he in everything helps them to good”; and certain it is, that God is the efficient cause, that makes all things work together for his people’s good. The persons to whom all things work together for good, are described as such

that love God;

a character, which does not agree with all the sons and daughters of Adam: love to God is not naturally in men; it is wrought in the soul in regeneration, and is an evidence of it; it grows up with faith, which works by it; without it, a profession of religion is vain; and where it is once wrought, it lasts for ever; it ought to be superlative and universal, constant, warm and ardent, hearty and sincere: such who have it, show it by a desire to be like to God, and therefore imitate him, by making his glory the supreme end of their actions; by being careful not to offend him; by delighting in his presence, in his people, word, ordinances, ways, and worship; and by undervaluing the world, and all things in it, in comparison of him; who is to be loved for the perfections of his being, the characters and relations he stands in and bears to his people, and on account of the love with which he has loved them, and which is indeed the spring and source of theirs. They are further described, as such

who are the called according to his purpose.

The called of God and of Jesus Christ; not to any office, or by the external ministry of the word only, but by special grace; from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from the company of sinful men to fellowship with Christ, from a trust in their own righteousness to a dependence on his, to grace here, and glory hereafter; which is done according to the purpose of God: the persons called are fixed upon by God; none are called but whom God purposed to call; those who are called

can assign no other reason of it than the will of God; and no other reason but that can be given why others are not called; the time when, the place where, the means whereby persons are called, are all settled and determined by the will, and according to the purpose of God.

FOOTNOTES:

- F11 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 108.
2. Cosri, fol. 151. 1.
F12 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2.

Romans 8:29

For whom he did foreknow

The foreknowledge of God here, does not intend his prescience of all things future; by which he foreknows and foretells things to come, and which distinguishes him from all other gods; and is so called, not with respect to himself, with whom all things are present, but with respect to us, and which is eternal, universal, certain, and infallible; for in this sense he foreknows all men, and if this was the meaning here, then all men would be predestinated, conformed to the image of Christ, called by grace, justified and glorified; whereas they are a special people, whom God has foreknown: nor is this foreknowledge to be understood of any provision or foresight of the good works, holiness, faith, and perseverance of men therein, upon which God predestinates them to happiness; since this would make something out of God, and not his good pleasure, the cause of predestination; which was done before, and without any consideration of good or evil, and is entirely owing to the free grace of God, and is the ground and foundation of good works, faith, holiness, and perseverance in them: but this regards the everlasting love of God to his own people, his delight in them, and approbation of them; in this sense he knew them, he foreknew them from everlasting, affectionately loved them, and took infinite delight and pleasure in them; and this is the foundation of their predestination and election, of their conformity to Christ, of their calling, justification, and glorification: for these

he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;

having perfect, distinct, special knowledge of them, joined with love to them, he predetermined, or fore-appointed them in his eternal mind, in his everlasting and unchangeable purposes and decrees to this end,

conformity to the image of Christ; which is not to be understood of the Spirit of Christ: God's elect indeed are chosen to be holy, and through sanctification of the Spirit, but are never said to be conformed, made like to the Spirit, nor is the Spirit ever called the image of Christ; but this designs either likeness to Christ as the Son of God, or conformity to him in his human nature. There is indeed a great disparity between the sonship of Christ, and of the saints; he is the eternal and natural Son of God, he is the one and only begotten Son, they are adopted ones, yet in some things there is a likeness; as he is the Son of God, so are they the sons of God, though not in the same sense; as he is a beloved Son, so are they; as he is the firstborn with respect them, they are the firstborn with respect to angels; as he has an inheritance, so have they; moreover, he has a very great concern in their sonship; the predestination of them to it is by him; the blessing itself is founded on union to him, on their conjugal relation to him, and his assumption of their nature; it comes to them through his redemption, and is actually bestowed on them by him; and this conformity to Christ as sons, will more fully appear hereafter, when they shall be like him, and see him as he is: or this may be understood of the saints' conformity to Christ in his human nature, both here and hereafter: here in holiness; the image of God was in in his first creation, this is defaced by sin; and in regeneration, the image of Christ is stamped, his grace is wrought in them, his Spirit is put into them, to enable them to walk in him, and after him: this will be complete hereafter, and will consist in perfect holiness, being freed from the very being, as well as the power and guilt of sin; in perfect knowledge of everything that will tend to their happiness; and in glory like to Christ, both in soul and body:

that he might be the firstborn among many brethren;

the persons among whom Christ is the firstborn are described by their relation, "brethren"; to one another, being related to the same Father, regenerated by the same grace, taken into the same family, and heirs of the same glory; and to Christ, which relation, as brethren to him, is not merely founded on his incarnation, but in their adoption; and which is evidenced by their regeneration, and doing the will of his Father; an which relation he owns, and is not ashamed of: they are also described by their number, "many"; for though they are but few, when compared with the world; yet they

are many, a large number, considered by themselves; and among these, Christ is the "firstborn"; he is the firstborn of God, the begotten of the Father, he is the first begotten, and as such he is the only begotten; he is the firstborn of Mary, she had none before him, and he is the only one that ever was born in the manner he was; he is the first begotten from the dead, his resurrection is called a begetting, and he was the first in time that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life, and the first in causality and dignity. Christ is the firstborn with respect to all creatures in general; he was begotten of the Father before all creatures were; he is the first cause of them all, the governor, basis, and support of them: and he is the firstborn with respect to the saints; who are of the same nature with him, are made partakers of the divine nature, are sons in the same family, though not in the same class of sonship: moreover, this character may regard not so much birth as privilege which belongs to Christ as Mediator; who, as the firstborn had, has the blessing, the government, the priesthood, and the inheritance; all which is owing to, and is one end of divine predestination. The Cabalistic F13 writers among the Jews give the name of "firstborn" to the second Sephira, number, or person, "Wisdom", which answers to the Son of God.

FOOTNOTES:

- F13 Vid. Cabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 200. & par. 2. p. 7.

Romans 8:30

Moreover, whom he did predestinate

Not to sufferings, which are not expressed nor designed, but to grace and glory after mentioned. This predestination is of particular persons, who, in consequence of it, are called, justified, and glorified; it is the effect of divine grace, and entirely owing to it; it is the source of all the other blessings of grace, and is therefore placed at the head of them, and secures them all:

them he also called;

not to afflictions: many may be called to afflictions, and endure them, who are neither justified nor glorified; besides, the people of God, though they meet with many afflictions, between their call to eternal glory, and their enjoyment of it, yet they are not so much called to afflictions, as to patience under them: their call is of grace, by special grace, to peculiar blessings of grace, and

to a kingdom and glory; and this their calling is secured by predestination, and connected with glorification: and whom he called,

them he also justified;

the meaning of which is, not that he approved of them as sincere and faithful, on account of their faith and patience in sufferings; for neither of their sufferings, nor of their faith and patience in them, is there the least mention in the passage; nor can any instance be produced of the use of the word "justified" in this epistle, or elsewhere in this sense: but the meaning is, that such persons whom God predestinates and calls, he makes them righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them; which is unto all, and upon all them that believe; by which they are justified before God, and in their own consciences, from all sin, and so secured from all wrath and condemnation; wherefore glorification stands inseparably connected with it:

and whom he justified, them he also glorified;

which is not meant of being made glorious under sufferings; nor of being made glorious by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; for the word is never used in this sense, nor is God ever said to glorify his people in this way; and the apostle is speaking of the saints in general, and not of particular ones: if this was the sense, none would be predestinated, called, and justified, but such who have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; and none would have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but such persons; whereas many have had these, and yet no interest in the grace of God, and everlasting happiness: but eternal glory is here meant, which is what the apostle had been speaking of in the context; is what the elect are predestinated and called unto; and which their justification gives them a right and title to; and will consist in a likeness to Christ, in communion with him, in an everlasting vision of him, and in a freedom from all that is evil, and in an enjoyment of all that is good; and so the great end of predestinating grace will be answered in them mentioned in the foregoing verse: now this glorification may be said to be already done, with respect to that part of God's elect, who are in heaven, inheriting the promises; and is in some sense true also of that part of them which is on earth, who are called and justified; being made glorious within by the grace of Christ, and arrayed and adorned with the glorious robe of his righteousness; by the one they have a meetness, and by the other a right to eternal glory; of which this grace they have received is the beginning,

pledge, and earnest: besides, they are already glorified in Christ, their head and representative, and in the view of God, and with respect to the certainty of it, it being prepared and made ready for them, is in the hands of Christ for them, and is insured to their faith and hope. It is an observation of a Jewish writer F14,

“that a thing (twyhl rzgny) , “which is decreed to be”, is spoken of in the past tense:”

this is the Scripture style concerning things decreed, and such is the glorification of all God's elect.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Aben Ezra, in Jon. ii. 2.

Romans 8:31

What shall we then say to these things? &c,

Either to these afflictions, shall we murmur and repine at them? no, since they work together for our good, and are not to be compared with our future glory, which is certain; for if we suffer with, and for Christ, we shall be glorified together: or to these blessings just now mentioned, as the foreknowledge of God, divine predestination, effectual calling, free justification, and eternal glorification, what can be said to these? nothing can be added to them, they are a complete set of blessings, wanting nothing; nor can the greatness of them be fully expressed, or the freeness of God's grace displayed in them, sufficiently declared: what remains for us to do, but to be thankful for them, and glory in them? or what can be said “against” them? nothing at all, they cannot be contradicted or gainsaid; they are true and faithful sayings; they can never be made void, and of no effect, by hell or earth; nor ought our unbelieving hearts to have anything to say against interest in them: or what is to be said, or inferred “from” them? why, the free, sovereign, unchangeable, and everlasting love of God, in providing and bestowing such benefits; and the certainty of salvation, which is infallibly secured hereby:

if God be for us;

or, “seeing he is for us”, has an affection for us, which appears from the gift of himself, Son, and Spirit, and all the blessings of grace and glory; and is on our side: as that he is on the side of his people, is evident from his preservation of them from the evils of the world and their own corruptions; from the supports he gives them under afflictions and temptations; from his carrying on the work of grace upon them, notwithstanding all

the opposition made unto it; and from their safety and security they enjoy by him, notwithstanding the power of their enemies; he is so for them, and on their side, as that he will certainly save them. This he has determined to do, he has sent his Son to obtain salvation for them, his Spirit to apply it to them, and keeps them by his power to the full enjoyment of it: and since this is the case,

who can be against us?

none can be against them. There are some that cannot possibly be against them; if Jehovah the Father is not against them, the Son cannot be against them, nor the Spirit; good angels cannot be against them, so far from it, that they rejoice at their good, minister to them, and are a guard about them; the law cannot be against them, because it is fulfilled in them; nor justice, because it is satisfied, and all its demands answered: and though there may be some who may be against them, and oppose themselves to them, yet their opposition is to no purpose; they will never prevail over them to their ruin and destruction; as neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world, nor death itself.

Romans 8:32

He that spared not his own Son

It is said that God spared not the angels that sinned, nor the old world, which was full of violence, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, whose wickedness was great, nor the Egyptians and their firstborn, refusing to let Israel go, nor the Israelites themselves, when they transgressed his laws, nor wicked men hardened in sin; all which is not to be wondered at; but that he should not spare “his own Son”, his proper Son, of the same nature with him, and equal to him, the Son of his love, and who never sinned against him, is very amazing: he spares many of the sons of men in a providential way, and in a way of grace, but he did not spare his own Son, or abate him anything in any respect, what was agreed upon between them, with regard to the salvation of his people; as appears by his assuming human nature, with all its weaknesses and infirmities; by his having laid on him all the iniquities of his people, and all the punishment due unto them he inflicted on him, without the least abatement; and by his sufferings not being deferred at all, beyond the appointed time; when full satisfaction for all their sins were demanded, the whole payment of their debts to the uttermost farthing insisted on, and all done according to the utmost strictness of divine

justice: and which was not out of any disaffection to him; nor because he himself deserved such treatment; but because of the counsel, purpose, and promise of God, that his law and justice might be fully satisfied, and his people completely saved: moreover, the sense of the phrase may be learnt from the use of it in the Septuagint version of (Genesis 22:12) , “thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me”, which that renders (ouk efeiso) , “thou hast not spared thy beloved Son for me”: so God did not spare his Son, because he did not withhold him:

but delivered him up for us all.

That is, God the Father delivered him, according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, into the hands of wicked men; into the hands of justice, and to death itself; not for all men, for to all men he does not give Christ, and all things freely with him, nor are all delivered from condemnation and death by him; wherefore if he was delivered up for all men, he must be delivered up in vain for some; but for “us all”, or “all us”, whom he foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified; and not merely as a martyr, or by way of example only, and for their good, but as their surety and substitute, in their room and stead: wherefore

how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

Christ is God's free gift to his elect; he is given to be a covenant to them, an head over them, a Saviour of them, and as the bread of life for them to live upon: he is freely given; God could never have been compelled to have given him; Christ could never have been merited by them; nothing that they could give or do could have laid him under obligation to have bestowed him on them; yea, such were the persons, and such their characters, for whom he delivered him up, that he might have justly stirred up all his wrath against them; and yet such was his grace, that he has given his own Son unto them; and not him alone, but “all things” with him: all temporal good things, needful and convenient; all spiritual blessings, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, adoption, and eternal life: and all “freely”, in a sovereign way, according to his own good will and pleasure, without any obligation or compulsion; not grudgingly nor niggardly, but cheerfully and bountifully, absolutely, and without any conditions; for he is not moved thereunto by anything in them, or performed by them.

Romans 8:33

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

&c.] The elect of God are a certain select number of persons, whom he has so loved, as of his sovereign good will and pleasure, to choose in Christ before the foundation of the world, unto eternal life and salvation, by certain ways and means of his own appointing, as sanctification and faith, so that they are peculiarly his: but are these persons chargeable with nothing criminal? yes, with Adam's sin; with a want of original righteousness; with multitudes of sins before conversion, some of them with very great ones; and all, even after conversion, with frequent infirmities and backslidings: and will none rise up and exhibit charges of this nature against them? yes, even now, they very often bring charges against themselves; they are very apt to charge one another; Satan, the accuser of the brethren, lays many things to their charge very frequently, and so do the men of the world; but all these charges avail nothing, since none of the divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, lay anything against them: not God the Father, for

it is God that justifieth;

he against whom sin is committed, who is the lawgiver, and the righteous judge, justifies them from every charge; not by teaching them the way of justification, nor by infusing righteousness into them, or on account of any works of righteousness done by them, but by pronouncing them righteous through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: observe, that “God's elect”, as such, are the objects of justification; which proves the eternity of it; the speciality of it as belonging to particular persons, and the everlasting security and continuance of it.

Romans 8:34

Who is he that condemneth

That is, the elect of God: all mankind are deserving of condemnation, and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam; some are foreordained to condemnation; all in final impenitence and unbelief, are condemned already; and the whole world of the ungodly will be condemned at the last day; but none of God's elect are, or shall be condemned: for they are loved with an everlasting love; they are chosen unto salvation; they are in Christ, where there is no condemnation; they are brought to believe in him, and by him are justified from all sin, and so are

secure from condemnation. They are indeed deserving of it as others, considered in themselves; and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam, with the rest of mankind; and in their own apprehensions, when convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And are there none that will condemn them? yes, their own hearts often condemn them; they are very forward to condemn one another; the world condemns them, and so does the god of it: but neither Father, Son, nor Spirit, will condemn them; not the Father, for he justifies; nor the Son, for

it is Christ that died:

that he died is certain; the death he died was the death of the cross; the persons he died for were God's elect; the reason of his dying for them was to make atonement for their sins; this came to pass through his substitution in their room and stead; this death of his was but once, yet of an eternal efficacy, and so a full security of them from all condemnation: for sin, the cause of condemnation, was removed by it; the condemnation itself was bore by Christ in their stead; the law and justice of God were satisfied by it; pardon of sin was procured by his blood; and complete justification obtained by his active and passive obedience; all which is confirmed by his resurrection, session at God's right hand, and intercession: wherefore it is added,

yea, rather that is risen again.

As the death, so the resurrection of Christ, is the security of God's elect from condemnation; inasmuch as Christ rose again, as a conqueror over death, and over sin, the sting of death, and over Satan, who had the power of death; and also as a surety, having given satisfaction to law and justice: he engaged as a surety for his people; God in justice, and according to his righteous law, dealt with him, and by him as such; he satisfied both, and therefore was set free by them; hence neither law nor justice can condemn; besides he rose again as a common person, head and representative of his people, and for their justification: he first stood charged with all their sins, which by his Father, and with his own consent, were imputed to him; he was condemned and suffered death for them; when he rose from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from them all; and all his people were justified in him, and with him: yea, the resurrection of Christ is rather a greater security from condemnation, than his death; Christ's death expiated sin, but his resurrection brought in the everlasting righteousness; notwithstanding Christ's death, had he not risen again, we should have been in

our sins, and so liable to condemnation; Christ's dying showed that he was arrested and condemned, but his resurrection shows that he is discharged, and we in him:

who is even at the right hand of God.

The ascension of Christ, his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God, are also a very considerable security of God's elect from condemnation; for when he ascended from earth to heaven in human nature, accompanied by angels, of which they and his disciples were witnesses, he led captivity captive, or triumphed over those that led his people captive, as sin, Satan, the law, death, and every other enemy of theirs; he entered into heaven to prepare it for them, to take possession of it in their name, to appear in the presence of God for them, and as having obtained the eternal redemption of them, where he was received with a welcome, as the surety and head of the chosen ones, and then sat down at the right hand of God; which shows that he had done his work, and to satisfaction, is advanced above all, power is given to him, all things are put under him, and he is head over all things to the church: and since he is at the right hand of God, as an advocate and intercessor for his people, it will be to no purpose, and of no avail, that Satan, or any other enemy, is at their right hand to resist them:

who also maketh intercession for us;

which is done, not by vocal prayer, as in the days of his flesh on earth; or as supplicating an angry judge; or as controverting: a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for us, by the presentation of his sacrifice, by offering up the prayers and praises of his people, by declaring it as his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon them, and by seeing to it, that the benefits of his death are applied to those, for whom they were designed; which intercession of Christ proceeds upon the foot of a satisfaction made; it always continues, and is ever prevalent, and so has a considerable influence to secure from condemnation. The apostle, in this verse, seems to have in view a passage in (Job 34:29) ; which the Septuagint render, "and he gives peace, and who is he that condemneth?"

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

&c.] By "the love of Christ" is not meant the saints' love to Christ, but his love to them; he is indeed the object of their love, and so strong is their love to him,

that it can never be destroyed; for though there may be an abatement in the fervour of it, it can never be lost; yet this is never called the love of Christ: besides, the apostle is speaking not of their love to Christ, but of the love of God and Christ to them, throughout the context; and his design is, to strengthen the faith of God's people, and comfort their souls, under their various afflictions: now nothing more effectually serves such purposes, than the love of Christ; and the things here instanced in are such, as are apt to inject doubts and fears, about interest in the love of Christ, and of the love of God in Christ, as it is interpreted in some following verses: moreover, the separation here interrogated is not of Christ from us, but of us from him; whereas was it our love to Christ, which is here meant, it should rather have been put, who shall separate him from us, and not us from the love of Christ? That Christ does love the elect of God, who are the persons here spoken of, is evident from his undertaking for them, espousing their persons, assuming their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying off their debts, and redeeming their persons, by going to prepare a place for them, by interceding for them, by supplying them with all grace, and using them in the most free and familiar manner; which love of his is wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable, special and peculiar, free and undeserved, exceeding affectionate, unchangeable, durable, and for ever. This is the bond of union to Christ; and the union which is made by it is exceeding near and close; it is real; perfect, and indissoluble, nothing can separate from it: not

tribulation;

or "affliction", which springs from his love, and is the fruit of it; and notwithstanding that, he rests in his love; this is not taken away, but is often sensibly enjoyed, in the midst of afflictions:

or distress;

whether of body or mind; straitness in the affairs and circumstances of life, or straitness of mind, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; for "though we believe not, yet he abides faithful", (2 Timothy 2:13) , to his covenant and promises:

or persecution:

from the world; for this is rather an evidence that Christ has loved them chosen and called them, because the world hates them:

or famine:

want of the necessaries of life, as food and drink; being exposed to great hunger and thirst, which has sometimes been the lot of the dear children of God:

or nakedness;

want of proper clothing, or the use of common apparel; wandering about in sheep skins and goat skins, which has been the case of some, of whom the world was not worthy, and so no proof of separation from the love of Christ:

or peril;

dangers from different quarters, by different persons and ways; such as the Apostle Paul had trial of, who was highly in the love of Christ, (1 Corinthians 11:26) ;

or sword;

that is, death by the sword; which death James the brother of John died, (Acts 12:13) : now, though this may separate the head from the body, and separate soul and body, yet cannot separate from the love of Christ.

Romans 8:36

As it is written, for thy sake we are killed

This passage is a citation out of (Psalms 44:22) ; and the meaning is, that for the sake of God, and his pure worship, Old Testament saints were frequently put to death, or exposed to the persecutions of men, which often issued in death; as New Testament saints have been, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, even

all the day long;

that is, they were liable to death all the day long; or every day, one or other of them was put to death:

we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter;

they were reckoned as fit for nothing else, and were continually exposed unto it; were used as sheep are, as if they were made for no other use and service, but to be slaughtered; hence they are called, "the flock of slaughter", (Zechariah 11:7) ; and as this expresses the brutality of their persecutors, so their harmlessness, meekness, humility, and patience in sufferings, being under them like lambs or sheep. This testimony is produced, to show that suffering death has been the common lot of the saints in all ages: and is designed to animate the people of God under the Gospel dispensation, to suffer with cheerfulness; the allusion may be to the lambs and

sheep daily slain for sacrifice; either to the lambs of the sacrifice slain morning and evening; or to others that were slain in any part of the day from morning to night, for other sacrifices, in the court of the tabernacle and temple.

Romans 8:37

Nay, in all these things

The former words being inserted in a parenthesis, these are an answer to the question in (Romans 8:35) , “what shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation?” &c. “nay”, it shall not, nor any of the other things mentioned: “in all these things”; afflictions, distresses, persecutions, famine, nakedness, sword, or any other thing of the same kind:

we are more than conquerors;

not only over sin and Satan, but the world, the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions of it; which they cheerfully and courageously undergo, insomuch that they are not only conquerors, but “more than conquerors”: they have above overcome, they have exceedingly the better of it; for they not only patiently bear afflictions and persecutions, but they glory in them; their experience, faith, and joy, are often increased by them; they have sometime solicited, and even wearied their persecutors; they have got the victory with ease, over Satan and his hellish emissaries, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony: but this is not owing to themselves, or through their own strength, but

through him that loved us;

meaning either God the Father, whose love is mentioned in the following verses, or rather the Lord Jesus Christ; and so some copies express it, “through Christ that loved us”: “through him”, who has got the victory over all his and his people’s enemies, and makes them sharers in his conquests; “through him”, who is able to help them, and has strength sufficient to carry them through, and brings them off more than conquerors; who has loved them, still loves them, and whose love engages his power to stand by them and protect them against all their enemies.

Romans 8:38

For I am persuaded

These words with the following, express the strong persuasion, and full assurance of faith the apostle had, that nothing whatever could separate him and the rest

of God’s people, from his love towards them in Christ Jesus. This persuasion not only regards himself, but others; and is not conjectural, but certain; and which did not arise from any special and extraordinary revelation, but is founded upon the nature of the love of God itself, the security of it in Christ, and of the persons of God’s elect in him; upon eternal predestination, and the unalterable purposes of God; upon the promise and oath of God; upon adoption, and the gracious witnessings, assistances, and inhabitation of the Spirit; and is greatly increased by the consideration of the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ. The things enumerated, which are not able to separate from the love of God, are as follow:

death;

death separates men from the world, their worldly habitations and substance; it separates the soul from the body, and one friend from another; and in process of time, may take off all thoughts and affections for departed friends, but it is not able to separate from the love of God; it is so far from it, that it lets the soul into the fullest enjoyment of it: and as corporeal death, so no other kind of death can do it; for if the death of the body cannot, the death of afflictions never can; and as for a moral or spiritual death, and an eternal one, these shall never befall the children of God:

nor life;

this natural and temporal life, which is frail and mortal; the love of God is better than this life, and this itself is the effect of divine favour; wherefore this can never separate from the love of God, nor anything in it: the life of believers is indeed filled up with troubles and exercises, and attended with much imperfection and sin; but nothing does, or can alienate the affections of God from his children; for though he exercises them with the trials of life, and chastises them for their sins, yet his loving kindness be does not take away from them:

nor angels;

by whom are meant evil angels, the devils; for as for good angels, they never attempt to separate God and his people; they rejoice at their good, minister to them, are their guardians whilst here, at death they carry their souls to heaven, and at the last day will gather all the elect together; but evil angels do endeavour it, by temptations to sin, and accusations for it; by stirring up heresies and persecutions, in order to destroy them, but cannot succeed; for the saints are upon God’s heart, are

in Christ’s hands, and on him the rock; and the Spirit of God is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world:

nor principalities;

civil magistrates; who though they may separate them from their company, and cast them out as evil; may separate them in prisons one from another; and separate soul and body, by killing the latter, which is all they can do; yet they cannot separate neither soul nor body from the love of God: the Jews often say, that if all the nations of the world were gathered together, they could not extinguish F14 or cause to cease F15, or take away the love which is between God and his people Israel F16:

nor powers;

either the same with the former; or false teachers who had the power of working miracles in confirmation of their doctrines, by which they deceived many; and if it had been possible, would have deceived the elect of God, but that was impossible:

nor things present;

present evils, the afflictions of the present life; God does not cease to love when he afflicts his people; yea, afflictions spring from his love, and in them he afresh manifests his love to them; they are overruled for their good, and issue in eternal glory. Present temptations also may be meant. The best of saints have been exposed unto them; Christ himself was not exempted from them; these do not, nor cannot separate from the love of God; which is manifest from the regard which God and Christ have to tempted ones, by sympathizing with them, supporting and succouring of them, rebuking the tempter, and delivering from them. Present desertions, or the hidings of God’s face, which often is the case of his dear children, can have no such effect; their relation to God still continues; they have great nearness unto him, are engraven on the palms of his hands, are set as a seal on his heart, and he bears a strong affection to them; though, for wise reasons, he is pleased for a moment to hide himself from them: yea, the present body of sin and death saints carry about with them in this life, cannot separate them; sin has separated the angels from God, who rebelled against him; it drove Adam out of the garden of Eden, and will exclude the wicked from the divine presence to all eternity; and it often separates between God and his own people, with respect to communion, but never with respect to union to him,

or interest in him; for he knew what they would be when he set his love upon them; his love broke through all the corruptions of nature and sins of life in their conversion; and appears to continue the same from the strong expressions of his grace to them, notwithstanding all their backslidings; could sin separate in this sense, no one would remain the object of his love. Now this does not suppose that God loves sin, nor does it give any encouragement to it; for though it cannot separate from interest in God, yet it does from the enjoyment of him. Again, present good things may be designed, the good things of this life, temporal enjoyments; these are given in love; and though they may be but few, they are in mercy, and with a blessing; and the great mercy of all is, that these are not their all, nor do they take off their value and esteem for the love of God, which is better to them than all the things of life; and though “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”, (Proverbs 1:32) , the prosperity of the saints shall never be their ruin:

nor things to come;

whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse; more afflictions, fresh difficulties with the body of sin; an hour of temptation, and time of distress that is to come upon all the earth; or the evil days of old age; God will never leave, nor forsake his people, or cause his loving kindness to depart from them, in whatsoever state or condition they may come into: the Vulgate Latin version adds, “nor fortitude”; and the Ethiopic version, “nor powers”; and one copy adds it in the beginning of (Romans 8:39) , “nor power”.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Targum in Cant. viii. 7.

F15 Shemot Rabba, sect. 49. fol. 144. 1.

F16 Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 4.

Romans 8:39

Nor height, nor depth

Neither heaven, earth, nor hell, nor any of the inhabitants of either, or anything in either; no high or low place, to be cast down from the one, or into the other; nor the height of honour and prosperity, or the depth of meanness and adversity; nor the height of power, or depth of policy in men or devils;

nor any other creature.

This takes in the whole compass of created beings in heaven, earth, and sea; and most strongly expresses

the inseparableness of the saints from the love of God, by anything or creature whatever; nothing in the whole universe

shall be able to separate us the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord:

by “the love of God”, is not meant the saints’ love to God; for though this is sometimes called the love of God, it is from him, as the author of it, and to him, as the object of it, and may be said to be in Christ, or by him, and can never be lost; yet the apostle would not have expressed such a strong confidence and full persuasion about this, and would rather have said, had this been his meaning, that nothing shall be able to separate our love from God, or God from our love, and not us from the love of God; besides, he is speaking of that love by which we are more than conquerors, and manifestly intends the love with which God loves his people, particularly the love of God the Father: and this is “in Christ Jesus our Lord”; he has expressed it in and through Christ, in choosing and blessing them in him, and in sending him to die for them; and it still continues in him, and is in him as their Lord, head, husband, and Redeemer; and is a reason why nothing can separate them from it: which is to be understood, not of the effects of love, and the application of it, which may be suspended for a time; nor of the manifestation and sense of it, which believers may be without for a while; nor of any sort of separation from God, for saints themselves may be separated from him, with respect to intimate sensible communion and fellowship; but the sense of this passage is, that they can never be separated from the love of God, so as that that union which is made by it between God and them can ever be dissolved, or they cease to have any share or interest in his love. This the apostle was persuaded could never be

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 9

The apostle having discoursed of justification and sanctification, and of the privileges of justified and sanctified ones, proceeds to treat of predestination, the source and spring of all the blessings of grace; and to observe how this distinguishing act of God’s sovereign will has taken place, both among Jews and Gentiles; in treating of which, he knew he should go contrary to the sense of his countrymen the Jews, who have a notion that all Israel shall have a part in, or inherit the world to come {q}: and that the Gentiles will be for ever miserable; and nothing was more disagreeable to them,

than to talk of their rejection of God, and the calling of the Gentiles; wherefore that it might be manifest, that it was not out of pique and ill will to them, that the apostle said the things hereafter related; he expresses the most cordial affection to them imaginable, and which he introduces in Ro 9:1 , by way of appeal to Christ, who knew the truth of what he was about to say, and who could, together with the Spirit of God and his own conscience, testify for him that it was no lie: the thing he appeals for the truth of, is in Ro 9:2 , that the salvation of the Jews lay near his heart; that it was no pleasure to him to think or speak of their rejection, but was what gave him continual pain and uneasiness: and his great desire for their good is expressed in a very strong and uncommon manner, Ro 9:3 , the reasons of it are partly the relation they stood in to him, being his brethren and kinsmen; and partly the many privileges they had been favoured with of God; an enumeration of which is given, Ro 9:4,5 , and foreseeing an objection, he prevents it, which might be made, that if the Jews were cast off, the promise of God to that people that he would be their God, would become void, and the preaching the Gospel of Christ to them of no effect; to which he answers by distinguishing between Israel and Israel, or the elect of God among them, and those that were not; wherefore though the latter were rejected according to the purpose of God, the promise and preaching of the word had their effect in the former, Ro 9:6 , and that there was such a distinction, he proves from the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, who were both Abraham’s seed; yet one was a child of promise, and the other a child of the flesh, and were emblematical of the children of the promise, and the children of the flesh among that people; Ro 9:7-10 , and further confirms this by the instance of Jacob and Esau, who were born of the same parents, and were twins; and yet one was in the favour of God, and the other not; and that this was owing not to works, but to the sovereign will of God in election, he proves by observing that this was before good or evil were done by either of them, Ro 9:11 , and that this was notified to Rebekah before, Ro 9:12 , as appears from a passage in Ge 25:23 , and by another passage in Mal 1:2,3 , which is cited, Ro 9:13 , then an objection is started, Ro 9:14 , that if God loves one, and hates another, both being in equal circumstances, as Jacob and Esau were, he must be guilty of unrighteousness; which he answers and removes, first by a detestation of such a charge against God, and then by producing testimonies out of the books of Moses, proving both election and

reprobation, as being not of the works of men, but of the will of God; the former of these he proves, Ro 9:15 , from Ex 33:19 , by which it appears, that the choice of men to salvation is not according to the will of man, but according to the grace and love of God, Ro 9:16 , the latter he proves by the case of Pharaoh, Ro 9:17 , and the Scripture relating to that, Ex 9:16 , and from both testimonies concludes, Ro 9:18 , that God’s having mercy on one, and hardening another, are according to his sovereign will and pleasure; then another objection rises, up, if so, God has no reason to find fault with men that are hardened in sin, since they are according to his will, and in sinning do but fulfil it, and which no man resists; and this objection is formed in a very pert and sneering manner, and insinuates that God is cruel and acts unreasonably, Ro 9:19 , to which he answers, by putting the objector in mind that he was a man, a mere creature that started it, and that it was God against whom it was made; and by observing the folly and madness of replying against God, and the absurdity of such a procedure, taken from the consideration of the one being a creature, and the other the Creator, Ro 9:20 , and by instancing in the case of the potter, who has power over his clay, to form it in what shape, and for what use he pleases, Ro 9:21 , and accommodates this, both to the affair of election and reprobation, and to the business of the latter first, Ro 9:22 , where he observes the end of God in it to show forth his power and wrath, and describes the subjects of it, which clears him from injustice, and points at the patience of God towards them, which frees him from the charge of cruelty, Ro 9:22 , and then proceeds to apply the metaphor before used, to the objects of election styled vessels of mercy, and the end of the Lord to manifest the riches of his glory in them, and the method he takes to bring them to eternal happiness, by preparing them for it by grace, Ro 9:23 , which is done in the effectual calling, the objects of which are both Jews and Gentiles, Ro 9:24 , That it is the will of God that the Gentiles should be called, he proves, Ro 9:25,26 , from some passages in Hosea, Ho 2:23 1:10 , and that God had chosen, and so would call some among the Jews, he clearly makes appear, Ro 9:27-29 , from some prophecies of Isaiah, Isa 10:22,23 1:10 , and then he concludes the chapter by observing the free and distinguishing grace of God, in the calling of the Gentiles, and the justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; that such who were far off from it, and sought not after it, should enjoy it, Ro 9:30 , when the Israelites, who were diligent and zealous

in seeking after a righteousness to justify them before God, yet did not arrive to one, Ro 9:31 , the reasons of which are given, Ro 9:32 , because it was not the righteousness of faith, or the righteousness of Christ received by faith they sought; but a legal one, and by works which can never be attained by sinful men: they sought after a wrong righteousness, and in a wrong way, because they stumbled at Christ, and rejected him and his righteousness; and this removes an objection which is suggested in the two preceding verses, that God is unrighteous in calling the Gentiles, who never sought after righteousness, and in rejecting the Jews that followed after one: and that they did stumble at Christ and his righteousness, is no other than what was foretold in Isa 8:14 , and that whoever believes in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be saved, he suggests is a doctrine agreeably to Isa 28:16 , which passages are referred to, Ro 9:33 . {q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

ROMANS CHAPTER 9

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which

followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS CHAPTER 9

Romans 9:1

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not

The apostle being about to discourse concerning predestination, which he had mentioned in the preceding chapter, and to open the springs and causes of it, and also concerning the induration and rejection of the Jewish nation; he thought it necessary to preface his account of these things with some strong assurances of his great attachment to that people, and his affection for them, lest it should be thought he spoke out of prejudice to them; and well knowing in what situation he stood in with them, on account of his preaching up the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and how difficult it might be for him to obtain their belief in what he should say, he introduces it with a solemn oath, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not": which refers not to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, but to what he was going to say; and is all one as if he had said, as I am in Christ, a converted person, one born again, and renewed in the spirit of my mind, what I am about to speak is truth, and no lie; or I swear by Christ the God of truth, who is truth itself, and I appeal to him as the true God, the searcher of hearts, that what I now deliver is truth, and nothing but truth, and has no falsehood in it. This both shows that the taking of an oath is lawful, and that Christ is truly God, by whom only persons ought to swear:

my conscience bearing me witness.

The apostle, besides his appeal to Christ, calls his conscience to witness to the truth of his words; and this is as a thousand witnesses; there is in every man a conscience, which unless seared as with a red hot iron, will accuse or excuse, and bear a faithful testimony to words and actions; and especially a conscience enlightened, cleansed, and sanctified by the Spirit of

God, as was the apostle's: hence he adds,

in the Holy Ghost;

meaning either that his conscience was influenced and directed by the Holy Ghost in what he was about to say; or it bore witness in and with the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost with that; so that here are three witnesses called in, Christ, conscience, and the Holy Ghost; and by three such witnesses, his words must be thought to be well established.

Romans 9:2

That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

] This is the thing he appeals to Christ for the truth of, and calls in his conscience and the Holy Ghost to bear witness to. These two words, "heaviness" and "sorrow", the one signifies grief, which had brought on heaviness on his spirits; and the other such pain as a woman in travail feels: and the trouble of his mind expressed by both, is described by its quantity, "great", it was not a little, but much; by its quality it was internal, it was in his "heart", it did not lie merely in outward show, in a few words or tears, but was in his heart, it was a heart sorrow; and by its duration, "continual", it was not a sudden emotion or passion, but what had been long in him, and had deeply affected and greatly depressed him: and what was the reason of all this? it is not expressed, but may pretty easily be understood; it was because of the obstinacy of his countrymen the Jews, the hardness of their hearts, and their wilful rejection of the Messiah; their trusting to their own righteousness, to the neglect and contempt of the righteousness of Christ, which he knew must unavoidably issue in their eternal destruction; also what greatly affected his mind was the utter rejection of them, as the people of God, and the judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, he full well knew was coming upon them, and which he was about to break unto them.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ

Some consider this as the reason of the apostle's great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart, because he had made such a wish as this, and read the words, "for I have wished", or "did wish"; that is, in my unregenerate state, whilst I was a persecutor of Christ, and a blasphemer of his name, I wished to be for ever

separated from him, and to have nothing to do with him; for then I thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and this I did out of respect to the Jewish nation, and because I would not relinquish the Jewish religion; but oh! what a trouble of mind is it to me? what uneasiness does it give me when I think of it, and reflect upon it? But this can never be the apostle's meaning, for he would never have appealed to Christ in so solemn a manner, and took an oath upon it, for the truth of his enmity to Christ, and alienation from him before conversion, which everybody knew; nor was it anything strange, that whilst he was an unbelieving Jew, he should wish himself separated from Jesus of Nazareth, and always to remain so; and his having done this before his embracing of Christianity could be no evidence of his present affection for the Jewish nation, especially since he repented of it, and was sorry for it. But this wish, whatever is meant by it, is mentioned as an instance of his great love to his countrymen the Jews. Many have thought that his meaning is, that he had so great a value for them, that he could even wish himself, and be content to be eternally separated from Christ, everlastingly banished from his presence, never to enjoy communion more with him, or in other words, to be eternally damned, that they might be saved. But this is what could never be, and which he knew, was impossible to be done, and was contrary to that strong persuasion he had just expressed in the close of the foregoing chapter. Nor is it consistent with his love to Christ, to wish any thing of this kind; it would make him to love the Jews much better than Christ; since, according to this sense, he must wish to be parted from him, that they might be saved, and consequently must love them more than Christ: nor is it consistent with, but even contrary both to the principles of nature and grace; it is contrary to the principles of nature, for a man to desire his own damnation upon any consideration whatever; and it is contrary to the principle of grace, which always strongly inclines to be with Christ, and not separated from him; in a word, to be accursed from Christ in this sense, could be no proper means of the salvation of the Jews, and therefore it cannot be thought to be desirable, or wished for. Some things are said indeed for the qualifying of this sense of the words, as that the apostle said this inconsiderately, when he was scarcely himself, through an ecstasy of mind, and intemperate zeal, and an overflow of affection for his nation; but this is highly to reflect upon the apostle, and to represent him in a very unworthy manner, when it is certain he said this with

the greatest deliberation and seriousness; he introduces it in the most solemn manner, with an appeal to Christ, the Holy Spirit, and his own conscience, and therefore it could never drop from him through incogitancy, and an overheated affection. Again, it is said, that this wish was made with a condition, if it was the will of God, but that he knew was not; or if it could be for the good of these people, this also he knew it could never be: the best qualification Of it is to say it is an hyperbolical expression; and so if it is, it must be with a witness, being such an hyperbole, as is not to be matched in sacred or profane writings. The words of Moses are thought to be a parallel one, “blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written”, (Exodus 32:32) ; but that is not to be understood of the book of eternal life; but either of the book of the law, as R. Sol. Jarchi expounds it, which God had ordered him to write, and his desire is, that his name might not stand there; or rather of the book of this temporal life, that he might die and not live. It remains then that these words must have another meaning. Now let it be observed, that the word (anayema) , here translated “accursed”, answers to the Hebrew word (Mrx) , which, with the Jewish writers, is one sort of excommunication in use among them, and the greater sort; the forth of it, as given by them, is very horrible, and shocking F18; (See Gill on John 9:22); and so we may observe the word “anathema” here used is mentioned as a form of excommunication in (1 Corinthians 16:22) (Galatians 1:8 Galatians 1:9) ; of all such as love not Christ and his Gospel, and make it appear by their principles or practices, or both, that they do not, and so ought to be removed from the communion of churches. Now, taking the word in this sense, the apostle’s meaning is, that he could wish to be excommunicated from Christ; that is, from the body of Christ, from the church of Christ, Christ mystical, as the word “Christ” is used, (1 Corinthians 12:12) ; to be deprived of the ordinance of Christ’s house, to be degraded from his office in it, and not to be so much as a member in it. He saw that these branches, the people of the Jews, were going to be cut off, and no longer to be of the church of God; and such was his affection to them, that he could have wished rather to be cut off himself, that they might be spared; and this was an instance of great love to them, since, next to Christ, the church and the ordinances of it were exceeding dear unto, and highly valued by the apostle. Again, it is worthy of observation, that the Hebrew word (Mrx) , which the Septuagint render by (anayema) , the word in the text,

is used for any thing devoted to God, and which could not be alienated to any other use or service; and if it was a man, or any among men that was devoted, it was not to be redeemed, but was “surely to be put to death”, (Leviticus 27:29) . Some have thought that Jephthah’s daughter was put to death upon this law; but be that as it will, the apostle here may reasonably be thought to allude unto it, and his sense be this, that he could wish himself (anayema einai apo tou cristou) , “to be devoted unto death”, not from Christ, but “by” Christ; and some copies read (upo) , “by”: I could wish that my dear Lord and Master, as if he should say, would appoint and order me to die, might this nation of mine but escape that ruin and destruction I see is coming upon them, as a nation and a church; I could be content to die the most accursed death, and be treated in the most ignominious manner, might they but be saved; a like expression is that of R. Ishmael {s}, (Ntrpk yna larvy ynb) “may I be an expiatory sacrifice for the children of Israel”;

“which (says one commentator F20) he said, (Ntbx Kwtm) , “because of his love to them”; and it is as if he should say, all the punishment which is right to come upon them, I will take it on myself, in order to atone for them;”

and says another F21,

“the sense is, he took upon him their redemption, and this he said, (wtbha bwrl) , “because of the greatness of his love:”

now for a man to die for his country, that a whole nation perish not, was agreeably to the sentiments both of Jews and Gentiles, and was the highest instance of love among men; “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”, (John 15:13) ; and this is carrying the sense of the apostle’s wish high enough, and not too far. The persons on whose account he could have expressed this wish, are described by their natural relation to him,

my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh:

he calls them his brethren, not in a spiritual sense, nor in a strict natural sense, but in a general way, as being of the same nation: it is a saying with the Jews F23, (Myxa larvy lk) , “all the Israelites are brethren”; for the same reason he calls them kinsmen; and these appellations he uses to remove that ill will and prejudice they had conceived in their minds against him, and to signify the ground of his affection for them: and he

adds, “according to the flesh”, to distinguish them from his spiritual brethren and relations; for though they were brethren in a national sense, they were not all so in a spiritual relation.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Rabbinic. p. 827, 828.

F19 Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1.

F20 Bartenora in ib.

F21 Maimon. in Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1.

F23 Caphtor, fol. 38. 1.

Romans 9:4

Who are Israelites

Which were their national name, as descended from Jacob, whose name was Israel; and it was accounted a very honourable one; see (Philippians 3:5) (2 Corinthians 11:22) ; and the very name they bore gave the apostle some concern that they should be cut off; and then he proceeds to enumerate the several distinguishing favours and privileges they had been partakers of:

to whom pertaineth the adoption;

not that special adoption, which springs from eternal predestination, is a blessing of the covenant of grace, comes through the redemption of Christ, and is received and enjoyed only by believers in him; for all that were Israelites, were not in this sense the children of God; but national adoption is here meant, by which the whole body of the people, as nation, were the sons of God, his firstborn:

and the glory;

either the ark of the covenant, which is so called in (Psalms 63:2) , according to Kimchi; or the clouds in the tabernacle and temple, which were called the glory of the Lord, and were symbols of his presence, the same with the Shekinah; and so Aben Ezra interprets power, the ark, and glory, the Shekinah, (Psalms 63:2) ,

and the covenants;

not the two Testaments, Old and New, but the covenant of circumcision, made with Abraham their father, and the covenant at Sinai they entered into with the Lord; some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, “the covenant”:

and the giving, of the law:

(hrwt Ntm) , a way of speaking the F24 Jews make use of when they take notice of this privilege; for it was peculiarly given to them with great solemnity by

God himself, through the disposition of angels into the hands of Moses the mediator, and by him to them; and on account of this, they reckoned themselves more beloved of God than the rest of mankind F25

and the service of God;

or “the service”, as in the Greek text. So the Jews F26 are used to call it (hdwbe) , “the service”; and false worship is called by them (hrz hdwbe) , “strange service”, which is the title of one of their Misnic tracts; and here it signifies the whole worship of God, in the whole compass of it, sacrifices, prayer, praise daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly:

and the promises;

both temporal and spiritual, especially such as related to the Messiah, and which now had their accomplishment.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1. Zohar in Lev. fol. 5. 2, 3.

F25 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 103. 2.

F26 Vid. Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2.

Romans 9:5

Whose are the fathers

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for, according to the F1 Jewish writers,

“they call none in Israel (twba) , “fathers”, but three, and they are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and they call none “mothers” but four, and they are, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah:”

their descent from these fathers was a privilege, though they valued themselves too highly upon it; but what was the crown and glory of all, and which they took the least, though the apostle took the most notice of, is,

and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came;

that is, either of the fathers, or of the Israelites, from whom Christ, according to his human nature, sprung; being a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of David, and the son of Mary; hence the Messiah is called (larvyd ahyvm) , “the Messiah or Christ of Israel” F2:

who is described as

over all,

angels and men, being the creator, upholder, and governor of them; and as having another nature, a divine one, being

God,

truly and properly God,

blessed for evermore;

in himself, and to be blessed and praised by all creatures. The apostle alludes to that well known periphrastic name of God so much used by the Jews, (awh Kwr̄b vwdqh) , “the holy, blessed God”; to which, by way of assent and confirmation, the apostle puts his Amen.

Now all these particular privileges are mentioned by him, as what heightened his concern for these people; it filled him with heaviness and sorrow of heart, when he considered, that persons who had been partakers of such favours, and especially the last, that the Messiah should spring from them, be born of them, and among them, and yet that they should be given up to ruin and destruction.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

F2 Targum in Isa. xvi. 1, 5. Mic. iv. 8.

Romans 9:6

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect

Or “it is not possible indeed that the word of God should fall”; see (1 Samuel 3:10) ; This the apostle says, partly to relieve his own mind pressed with sorrow, and partly to obviate an objection some might make, or prevent any mistake any might be ready to go into; as though from what he suggested that what God had said concerning the people of the Jews, was made void and without effect: for whether by the “word of God” are meant, the Scriptures in general, the prophecies of the Old Testament, these were now about to have their accomplishment, in the rejection of the Jews, and in the conversion of the Gentiles; or whether by it is designed the Gospel, this, as preached both by Christ and his apostles, had had its effect upon God’s chosen ones among that people; it was become the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first: or rather by it may be intended, God’s word of promise to Abraham, that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him; and that he and they should be heir of the world, of this and of that which is to come; particularly the heavenly

inheritance, which he gave to him by promise; this was not made void, or had taken none effect: for this was made only to Abraham and his spiritual seed; and therefore though his carnal seed believed not, and for their unbelief should be cut off, this did not make the faith, or faithfulness of God of none effect:

for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel;

that is, they which are the descendants of the patriarch Jacob, whose name was Israel; or who are of the Israelitish nation, of the stock of Israel, belonging to that people; they are not all (larvy ta) , “the Israel”, by way of emphasis, as in (Psalms 25:22) , or the “Israel of God”, (Galatians 6:16) , the Israel whom Jehovah the Father has chosen for a peculiar people; which Christ has redeemed from all their iniquities; which the Spirit of God calls with an holy calling, by special grace, to special privileges; the seed of Israel who are justified in Christ, whose iniquities are so pardoned and done away, that when they are sought for they shall not be found, and who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: or in other words, though they are “Israel after the flesh”, (1 Corinthians 10:18) , yet not after the Spirit; though they are by nation Israelites, they are not Israelites “indeed”, as Nathanael was, (John 1:47) ; they are Jews outwardly, not inwardly; they have not all principles of grace, uprightness, and sincerity in them: now to these spiritual Israelites, or seed of Abraham, were the word of God, the promises of God concerning spiritual and eternal things made, and upon these they had their effect; and therefore it could not be said that the word of God had taken none effect; though the whole body of Israel after the flesh were cut off and rejected. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “who are Israelites”; and the Ethiopic version, “they are not all Israel who came out of Egypt”.

Romans 9:7

Neither because they are the seed of Abraham

The Jews highly valued themselves, upon being the natural seed of Abraham; and fancied, upon this account, that they were children, which the apostle here denies: neither

are they all children;

as in the former verse, he explains in what sense they were Israelites, which he had mentioned among their high characters and privileges, as descending from Jacob, and in what sense they were not; so in this he

shows in what manner the “adoption”, (Romans 9:4) , belonged to them, and it did not; being Abraham’s seed, they were his natural children, and the children of God by national adoption; but, they were not all the spiritual children of Abraham, nor the children of God by the special grace of adoption; these characters only belonged to some of them, and which are equally true of Gentile believers; who being of the same faith with Abraham, are his children, his seed, and also the children of God: natural descent from Abraham avails nothing in this case, as is clear from the instance of Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the natural seed of Abraham, as well as Isaac; but he was not a son of Abraham in a spiritual sense, nor a child of God; he was not a child of promise, this was peculiar to Isaac:

but in Isaac shall thy seed be called;

see (Genesis 21:12) . The meaning of which is, either that the progeny of Abraham in the line of Isaac should only be called, accounted, and esteemed, in an eminent sense, the seed of Abraham, and not his posterity in the line of Ishmael: agreeably to which the Jews say F3, that

`` Ishmael is not (Mhrba lv werz llkb) , “in the general account of the seed of Abraham”; for it is said, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called”, (Genesis 21:12) ; nor is Esau in the general account of the seed of Isaac; hence, says R. Joden bar Shalom, in Isaac, that is, in part of Isaac.”

So another F4 of their writers, on mentioning this passage, observes,

`` that it is said in Isaac, (ולא כל יצק) , but “not all Isaac”;

or all that sprung from him. Or this has respect to the most eminent and famous seed of Abraham, the Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; who was to spring from him by Isaac, in the line of Jacob; and may likewise have a personal respect to Isaac himself, the son of the promise, a child of Abraham in a spiritual sense, when Ishmael was not; and to whom belonged the spiritual promises and blessings, and who was to be, and was effectually called by the grace of God; and may include also his whole seed and posterity, who, both natural and spiritual, were children of the typical promise, the land of Canaan, and the enjoyment of temporal good things; and the matter also children of the antitypical promise, or of those spiritual and eternal things, which God has promised

to Abraham’s spiritual seed, whether among Jews or Gentiles; and which always have their effect, and had, even when, and though Abraham’s natural seed had a “lo ammi”, (Hosea 1:9) , written upon them.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 1.

F4 Yom Tob in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1.

Romans 9:8

That is, they which are the children of the flesh

This is an explanation of the foregoing verse, and shows, that by “the seed of” Abraham are meant, the natural seed of Abraham, who are born after the flesh, or descend from him by carnal generation:

these are not the children of God;

that is, not all of them, nor any of them, on account of their being children of the flesh, or Abraham’s natural seed; for adoption does not come this way; men do not commence children of God by their fleshly descent; they are not “born of blood”, but of God, who are the sons of God:

but the children of the promise are counted for the seed;

(tyrb ynb) “children of the covenant”, is a common phrase with the Jews; who reckoned themselves as such, because they were the seed of Abraham: thus in their prayers they say F5 to God,

`` we are thy people, (בני בריתך) , “the children of thy covenant”, the children of Abraham thy friend.”

And so they were the children of the covenant, or promise, which God made with Abraham and his natural seed, respecting the land of Canaan, and their enjoyment of temporal good things in it; but they were not all of them the children of the promise, which God made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, respecting spiritual and eternal things; to whom alone the promises of God, being their God in a spiritual sense, of spiritual and eternal salvation by Christ, and of the grace of the Spirit of God, and of eternal life belong; and who are the seed which were promised to Abraham by God, saying, “thou shalt be a father of many nations”, (Genesis 17:4) : for which reasons, because these spiritual promises belong to them, and because they themselves were promised to Abraham, as his children, therefore they are called

“children of the promise”: or rather, because as Isaac was a child of promise, being born after the Spirit, by virtue of the promise of God, through his divine power and goodness, when there were no ground or foundation in nature, for Abraham and Sarah to hope for a son; so these are called “children of promise”, (Galatians 4:28) , because they are born again, not through the power of nature, and strength of their own free will; they are not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, according to the will of God and his abundant mercy, by the word of truth, through his power, Spirit, and grace; and by faith receive the promises made unto them; and are counted and reckoned as “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”, (Galatians 3:29) , whether they be Jews, or whether they be Gentiles: and since now the promises of God are all made good to these persons, the word of God is not without effect, or is not made void, by the casting off the children of the flesh, or the carnal seed of Abraham, who were not children of the promise in the sense now given.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 1. Ed. Amstelod.

Romans 9:9

For this is the word of promise

The following passage is the Scripture, which contains the promise concerning the birth of Isaac; which was the produce, not of nature, but of divine grace and power; and was typical of the regeneration of God’s elect, who “as Isaac was, are the children of promise”, (Galatians 4:28) , for as Ishmael was a type of them that are born after the flesh, and are carnal men, so Isaac was a type of those, who are born after the Spirit, and are spiritual men: the promise is,

at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son;

the passage referred to is in (Genesis 18:10) ; which there stands thus, “I will certainly return unto thee, according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son”: some difference there is between the words as cited by the apostle, and as they stand in the original text; the word “lo”, is omitted by the apostle, nor was there any necessity to repeat it, since it was used only to excite Abraham’s faith, attention, and wonder; also the phrase “thy wife”, is neglected, the reason is, because the words in Genesis are an address to Abraham, here

the substance of the promise to him is produced; besides it was not only well known in the apostle’s time, that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, but that as such she brought forth Isaac, wherefore it was not so very necessary it should be mentioned here; add to this, that it is not repeated in (Genesis 18:14) , which will justify our apostle in the omission of it: but the greater seeming difference is, that what in Genesis is rendered, “according to the time of life”, is by the apostle, “at this time”: some think, that there may be an emendation of the present original text, and suppose a various reading, and that the apostle, instead of (hyx) , “life”, read (hzx) , “this”, but there is no occasion for such a supposition, or to make this amendment: for the phrase “the time of life”, signifies the present time, the “nunc stans”; so R. Levi ben Gerson F6, understands this phrase, “according to the time of life”, (hte tdmwew tmyyq ayhv tazh tek) , “according to this time which is now standing and abiding” and adds, rightly is this said, because neither time past nor to come are to be found, only the present time, the “nunc stans” and afterwards more than once explains it, of this present time, the next year: and so both R. Solomon Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra F7, expound it, (tazh tek) , “according to this time”, the year following; that is, exactly according to this present time next year, or this time twelve month; besides, in (Genesis 17:21) it is said, “at this set time”, and in (Genesis 18:14) , “at the appointed time”; all which support the apostle in his version.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Perush in Gen. fol. 26. 4. & 27. 2, 3. Vid. in 2 Reg. iv. 16.

F7 In Gen. xviii. 10.

Romans 9:10

And not only this

This instance of Ishmael and Isaac, is not the only one, proving that Abraham’s natural seed, the children of the flesh, are not all children, the children of God:

but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac,

“it was said unto her”, (Romans 9:12) , being in a parenthesis, “the elder shall serve the younger”. The apostle was aware, that the Jews would be ready to say, that the instance of Ishmael and Isaac was not a pertinent one; since Ishmael was not born of Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham, but of a bondwoman, which

was the reason his rejection, when Isaac was the son of promise, by the lawful wife, and that they were children of Abraham in the line of Isaac, and so children of the promise, as he was: wherefore he proceeds to mention the case of Jacob and Esau, which was not liable to any such exception; seeing they not only had the same father, but the same mother, Isaac’s lawful wife; they were conceived by Rebecca at once, were in the same womb together, were twins, and if any had the preference and advantage, Esau had it, being born first; and yet a difference was made between these two by God himself, and which was notified by him to the mother of them, before either were born.

Romans 9:11

For [the children] being not yet born,

So says F8 the Chaldee paraphrast,

“the prophet said unto them, was it not said of Jacob, (dylta ald de) , “when he was not yet born”, that he should be greater than his brother?”

the Syriac version supplies, “his children”, that is, Isaac’s; and the Arabic version, “his two children”. This shows, that the apostle designs not the posterity, but the very persons of Jacob and Esau; since as he speaks of their conception in the verse preceding, so of their birth in this: and though in the words of God to Rebecca, and which are urged in favour of the other sense, it is said, “two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people”, (Genesis 25:23) ; yet this primarily respects the persons of Jacob and Esau, as the roots of their respective offspring; and only secondarily their posterity, as branches that should sprout from them; it properly regards their persons, and only in an improper, figurative, and metonymical sense, their seed; for in no other sense could two nations, or two manner of people be in Rebecca’s womb, than as there were two persons there, who would be the authors of two nations and people; and whatever may be said for their respective posterity, taking their rise from one common father Isaac, or for their being chosen or rejected as nations, before they were in being as such, yet it cannot be said with any propriety, that “Rebecca conceived” their several offspring “by one, even by our father Isaac”, (Romans 9:10) : which sense well agrees with the scope of the apostle, which is to prove, that

all were not Israel which were of Israel, and that all Abraham’s natural seed were not the children of God; which he could not better exemplify, than in the persons of Jacob and Esau; for to have instanced in the posterity of Esau, would have been foreign to his purpose, and not accord with the continuation of his discourse in the following verses, which entirely proceeds upon the subject of personal election and rejection, and with the scriptural account of the personal characters of Jacob and Esau; and from hence, as from many other passages, it may be concluded, that predestination, whether to life or death, is a personal thing, concerns particular persons, and not nations, or collective bodies of men:

neither having done any good or evil;

Jacob and Esau were under all considerations upon an equal foot, were just in the same situation and condition, when the one was loved and the other hated; or in other words, when the one was chosen, and the other rejected; they were neither of them as yet born, and had they been born, their birth and parentage could have been no reason why one was chose and the other not, because in both the same; nor had the one performed a good action, or the other an evil one; so that Jacob was not loved for his good works, nor Esau hated for his evil ones; which confirms the truth of this doctrine, that the objects of predestination, whether to life or death, are alike, are in the same situation and condition: whether they are considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen, they are all equally such, so that there could not be any reason in them, why some should be chosen and others left; or whether in the pure mass, antecedent to the fall, and without any consideration of it, which is clearly signified in this passage, there could be nothing in the one, which was not in the other, that could be the cause of such a difference made: so that it follows, that works neither good nor evil are the causes moving God to predestinate, whether to life or death; good works are not the cause of election to eternal life, for not only, this act of distinguishing grace, passed before any were done, but also these are fruits, effects, and consequence of it, and so cannot be the causes thereof; God does not proceed in order branches of salvation, as in calling, justification according to them, and therefore it cannot be thought he should proceed upon this foot in the first step to it; and which is ascribed to his free grace, in opposition to works. Evil works are not the cause of the decree of rejection, for this also being as early as the decree of election, as it must unavoidably

be, was before any evil works were done; sin is not the cause of God's decree, but of the thing decreed, eternal death; otherwise all the individuals in the world being equally in sin, must have been rejected: it remains then, that not any works of men, good or bad, are the cause of predestination in either of its branches, but the sovereign will and secret counsel of God: that

the purpose of God according to election might stand:

the decree of God, which is entirely free, and depends upon his own will and choice, stands firm and immutable, and is not to be disannulled by earth or hell, for it stands not on the precarious foot of works:

not of works:

did it, it would not stand sure, for nothing is more variable and uncertain, than the actions of men:

but of him that calleth:

who is the unchangeable Jehovah; it stands upon his invariable will and immutable grace, whose "gifts and calling are without repentance", (Romans 11:29).

FOOTNOTES:

F8 Targum in Hos. xii. 3.

Romans 9:12

It was said unto her

To Rebecca, (Genesis 25:23),

the elder shall serve the younger,

or "the greater shall serve the lesser", an Hebrew way of speaking; so Japheth is called (lwdgh) , "the great", or, as we render it, "the elder", (Genesis 10:21) ; and the evil imagination is said F9 to be (lwdg) , "greater", that is, elder than the good, thirteen years; (See Gill on Luke 22:26); The sense is, Esau shall be a servant to Jacob; which is to be understood, not of temporal servitude; for in this sense he never was a servant to him; so far from it, that as soon as Jacob had got the birthright and blessing, he was obliged to flee from the face and fury of Esau; and upon his return after many years, he sent messengers to Esau in a very submissive manner, charging them after this manner, "thus shall ye shall say to my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob saith thus" (Genesis 32:4) , and when he found that his brother was coming to meet him, which threw him into a panic fear, lest he should "smite [him], and the mother with the children", (Genesis 32:11), he prepares presents for him; and when he came to him, bowed himself seven

times, and his wives and children bowed likewise; and the language in which he addressed his brother Esau, all the while they were together, was that of "my lord": now if this oracle was to be understood of outward temporal servitude, it is strange it should have no appearance, nor any shadow of an accomplishment in the persons of Jacob and Esau, supposing it was to have one in their posterity; and indeed the completion of it, in this sense, is not very evident in their offspring. It is certain, there was a long train of dukes and kings in Esau's family, before there was any king in Israel; the posterity of Esau were in lordly grandeur and splendour, when the children of Israel were grievously oppressed with hard bondage in Egypt. The single instance usually referred to, when the Edomites became tributaries to David, was near a thousand years after the giving out of this oracle; and this show of servitude did not last long, for in Joram's time they revolted, and so continued; and it is evident, that at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the children of Edom were prosperous and triumphant, and said concerning Jerusalem, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof", (Psalms 137:7) : this servitude therefore is to be understood in a spiritual sense, of Esau's exclusion from the favour of God, and blessings of grace, signified by his being rejected from inheriting the blessing, which was given to Jacob; and it appeared that he was not a son, but a servant, by his departure, and pitching his dwelling elsewhere; which showed he had no interest in spiritual adoption, no right to the covenant of grace, nor was he an heir of heaven, all which were peculiar to Jacob: Esau was a servant of sin, under the dominion of it, and in bondage to it; whilst Jacob was the Lord's freeman, and, as a prince, had power with God and with men, and prevailed: Esau was serviceable to Jacob, both in things temporal and spiritual; as reprobates are to the elect, for all things are for their sakes, and work together for their good; Jacob's being obliged to flee from his brother, was for his good; by this means he got him a suitable wife, and large substance: his brother's meeting him on his return, which gave him so much pain and uneasiness, issued in his spiritual good; this sent him to the throne of grace, to humble himself before God, acknowledge his mercies, and his dependence on him, to implore his help, and plead his promises; and thus the oracle was verified in the persons of Jacob and Esau.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Midrash Kohelet, fol. 80. 1.

Romans 9:13

As it is written

In (Malachi 1:2 Malachi 1:3) ;

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

These words are explanative of the former; they are of like import, and the one interpret the other; and show, that the former are to be understood in a spiritual, and not in a temporal sense, and of the persons, and not the posterity of Jacob and Esau; for though Malachi prophesied long after Jacob and Esau were personally dead, yet the Lord in that prophecy manifestly directs the murmuring Jews to the personal regard he had had to Jacob and Esau, and which had continued in numberless instances to their respective posterities, in order to stop their mouths, and reprove their ingratitude; and though he speaks of the nation of the Edomites, and to the posterity of Israel, yet it is evident, that he has a respect to the persons of Jacob and Esau, from whence they sprung, when he says, "was not Esau Jacob's brother?" (Malachi 1:2) , now though an Edomite may be said to be brother to an Israelite, yet Esau is never said, nor can he with any propriety be said to be the brother of Jacob's posterity: it remains, that these words regard their persons, and express the true spring and source of the choice of the one, and the rejection of the other; and which holds true of all the instances of either kind: everlasting and unchangeable love is the true cause and spring of the choice of particular persons to eternal salvation; and hatred is the cause of rejection, by which is meant not positive hatred, which can only have for its object sin and sinners, or persons so considered; but negative hatred, which is God's will, not to give eternal life to some persons; and shows itself by a neglect of them, taking no notice of them, passing them by, when he chose others; so the word "hate" is used for neglect, taking no notice, where positive hatred cannot be thought to take place, in (Luke 14:26) .

Romans 9:14

What shall we say then?

&c.] A form of expression the apostle frequently uses, when he is about to introduce an objection, as is what follows:

is there unrighteousness with God?

This is not an objection of his own, but of an adversary, which he takes up and returns an answer to; and which itself greatly serves to settle and confirm the

true sense and meaning of the apostle in this place; as that it could not be, that election and rejection of men should proceed according to their merits; or that God chooses some for their good works, and rejects others for their wicked works, because no man could ever pretend to charge God with unrighteousness on this account; nor could it be that God chose and rejected men, upon a foresight of their good and evil works, for this also would not be liable to such an objection; nor that the Jews, having made the law of none effect by their traditions, despised the Gospel, crucified Christ, and persecuted his disciples, are therefore cast off, and the Gentiles, being obedient both in word and deed, are received into favour, for this likewise would not be chargeable with unrighteousness by men; but that two persons, as Jacob and Esau, and the same may be said of all mankind, being upon an equal foot, not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil, an inequality, a difference is made between them, by God himself; the one is chose, the other passed by: now in this is some show, some pretence at least, for such an objection; nor is it any wonder to meet with it from the carnal reason of men; wherefore we may be sure that the latter, and not either of the former, is the true sense of the apostle; since only this, and not either of them, is liable to such an exception: let us attend to the apostle's answer, which is "first" in his usual manner, by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid:

God is not unrighteous in his nature; nor in any of his ways and works; nor in this, in choosing some and rejecting others. There is no unrighteousness with God in that part of predestination, commonly called election; for this is neither an act of justice, nor injustice; not of justice, but of grace and mercy; of undue and undeserved grace and mercy, of mere sovereign grace and mercy; and is what God was not obliged to do; wherefore to choose some and not others, is no act of injustice; for injustice is a violation of justice, which has no place in this affair: if it is an act of injustice, it must be either to them that are chosen, or to them that are not; not to them that are chosen, to them it is an act of favour and good will, they are chosen to grace and glory, to holiness here, and happiness hereafter; not to them that are passed by, because they had no right nor claim to the grace and glory, which by this act are denied them, and therefore no injustice is done them. Every prince may choose his own ministers and favourites, and who

he will have of his privy council, without doing any indignation. injustice, to those he takes no notice of; every man may choose his own company who he will converse with, without doing any wrong to such he does not think fit to admit to an intimacy with him; and yet men are not willing to allow the Most High that liberty, which every man daily takes, and may lawfully make use of: nor is there any unrighteousness with God in the other branch of predestination, commonly called reprobation, which is either negative or positive; negative reprobation is the act of preterition, or God's passing by, leaving, taking no notice of some, while he chose others: now the objects of this act are to be considered either in the pure, or in the corrupt mass; if in the pure mass, i.e. of creatureship, which seems to be the apostle's meaning, as being not yet created, made, or born, and having done neither good nor evil; no injustice is done by this act, for as it found them, it left them; it put nothing into them, no evil in them, nor appointed them to any, of any kind; man after, and notwithstanding this act, came into the world an upright creature, and became sinful, not by virtue of this act, but by their own inventions: or if considered as in the corrupt mass, as fallen creatures, sunk into sin and misery, which is the case of all mankind; since God was not obliged to save any of the sinful race of men, whose destruction was of themselves, it could be no injustice to pass by some of them in this condition, when he chose others; for if it would have been no injustice to have condemned all, as he did the angels that sinned, whom he spared not, it can be no act of injustice in him, to leave some of them in that condition, which sin had brought them into, whilst he has mercy on others; unless to have mercy on any, can be thought to be an act of injustice: what unrighteousness can there be in this procedure, any more than in drowning the world of the ungodly, whilst Noah and his family were saved in the ark? or in raining showers of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities of the plain, whilst Lot, his wife, and two daughters, were delivered from the same? Positive reprobation is the decree, or appointment to damnation: now as God damns no man but for sin, so he has decreed to damn no man but for sin; and if it is no unrighteousness in him to damn men for sin, as to be sure it is not, so it can be no unrighteousness in him to decree to damn any for it: upon the whole it appears, that whatever show, upon first sight, there may be for a charge of unrighteousness against such a procedure of the Divine Being, there is no real foundation for it. The objection is to be treated with abhorrence and

Romans 9:15

For he saith to Moses

That is, God said to Moses. The apostle goes on to answer to the above objections, by producing some testimonies out of the writings of Moses, in favour of both branches of predestination; showing, that the doctrine he had advanced, was no other than what God himself had delivered to Moses, whose name and writings were in great esteem with the Jews, whereby the apostle might hope to give full satisfaction in this point. The first passage he cites, is in (Exodus 33:19) .

And will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

This is produced, in favour of special, particular, and personal election, and to clear it from any charge of unrighteousness; and by it, it appears, that God bestows his grace and mercy in time, on such persons he has willed and determined from all eternity to bestow it; this, is clear from hence, for since all this is dependent on his will, it must be as this was his will from eternity, seeing no new will can possibly arise in God, God wills nothing in time, but what he willed before time; that this grace and mercy are shown only to some persons, and that the only reason of this is his sovereign will and pleasure, and not the works and merits of men; wherefore since this grace and mercy rise out of his own free good will and pleasure, and are by no means the creature's due, it most clearly follows, that God in determining to bestow his grace and mercy, and in the actual doing of it, whilst he determines to deny it, and does deny it to others, cannot possibly be chargeable with any unrighteousness.

Romans 9:16

So then it is not of him that willeth

This is not a consequence drawn by an adversary, showing that if this be the case, it signifies nothing for men to will or do, they may even sit still and do nothing, but depend on the mercy of God; but this is a conclusion of the apostle's from the above cited testimony, inferring from thence, that election, which is what he is discoursing of, is "not of him that willeth",

nor of him that runneth:

that is, is not owing to the will or works of men, to the desires, inclinations, and affections of their minds,

or to the actions of their lives; these are not the motives, conditions, or causes of this act:

but of God that sheweth mercy;

in a free sovereign way and manner, which he is not obliged to by anything the creature wills or works; he is at full liberty, notwithstanding whatever they will or do, to give his grace and mercy, when, where, and to whom he pleases; and therefore to give it to some, and deny it to others, can never be accounted an act of injustice, since he is not bound to give it to any. Some make the it to be the blessing of Isaac, which was not of the will of any of the parties concerned; not of Isaac who willed it to Esau; nor of Esau who willed it to himself, but had it not; nor of the will of the persons who had their desires, not of the will of Rebecca, who was desirous of it for her son Jacob, nor of the will of Jacob, who desired it for himself, though he had it; nor of either of them that ran, not of Esau, who made haste to hunt for, and prepare venison for his father, nor of Jacob, who ran to the flock, for two kids of the goats; but of God that showed mercy to him, who, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, had signified before to Rebecca, that "the elder should serve the younger", (Genesis 25:23) (Romans 9:12) : as the apostle had mentioned this so lately, it might still be in his thoughts, and he may allude to it; but election being what he is discoursing of in the context, that is the "it" here designed; and what is true of that, is true of salvation in all its parts, and therefore some understand it in the large sense of salvation; though by others so qualified and limited, as to spoil the glory of the text: some saying that the sense is, it is not of him that willeth and runneth wrong, but of the grace and mercy of God; but as no man would ever assert, that salvation is of him that wills and runs wrong, so the apostle had no occasion to deny it: others say, that it is not only of him that wills, and only of him that runs, but also of God that shows mercy; making man's will and works joint causes with the mercy of God in man's salvation; and besides, as Austin F11 long ago observes, according to this sense, the words might as well be read, it is not only of God that shows mercy, but of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, which no Christian would dare to say: the true sense is, that as election, which is the leading step to salvation, is not owing at all to the will of men, but to the good pleasure and will of God; and not at all to the works of men, that being done before them, and they being the fruits and effects of that, but to the free love, grace, and good will of God; so salvation in

all its parts and branches, as redemption, justification, regeneration, calling, and conversion, faith, repentance, hope, love and eternal life, is not to be ascribed at all to the will of men, nor at all to the works of men, but entirely and alone to the love, grace, and mercy of God through Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Enchiridion, c. 32.

Romans 9:17

For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh

(arq rma) , "The Scripture saith", is a Talmudic F12 way of speaking, used when any point is proved from Scripture; and is of the same signification with (anmxr rma) , "the merciful God says"; and so the sense of it here is, God said to Pharaoh; the testimony here cited, stands in (Exodus 9:16) ; where it is read thus, "for this cause have I raised thee up", (Kytdmeh) , or "made thee stand"; "for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth"; and is produced by the apostle in proof of the other branch of predestination, called reprobation, and to vindicate it from the charge of unrighteousness: in which may be observed, that the act of raising up of Pharaoh is God's act,

even for this same purpose have I raised thee up;

which may be understood in every sense that is put upon that phrase, unless that which some Jewish F13 writers have annexed to it, namely, that God raised Pharaoh from the dead; otherwise, I say, all the rest may well enough be thought to be comprised in it; as that God ordained and appointed him from eternity, by certain means to this end; that he made him to exist in time, or brought him into being; that he raised him to the throne, promoted him to that high honour and dignity; that he preserved him, and did not cut him off as yet; that he strengthened and hardened his heart, irritated, provoked, and stirred him up against his people Israel; and suffered him to go all the lengths he did, in his obstinacy and rebellion: all which was done,

that I might shew my power in thee;

his superior power to him, his almighty power in destroying him and his host in the Red sea, when the Israelites were saved: and the ultimate end which God had in view in this was,

that my name might be declared throughout all

the earth;

that he himself might be glorified, and that the glory of his perfections, particularly of his wisdom, power, and justice, might be celebrated throughout the world. The sum of it is, that this man was raised up by God in every sense, for God to show his power in his destruction, that he might be glorified; from whence the apostle deduces the following conclusion.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 82. 2. & 84. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 47. 1. Zebachim, fol. 4. 1, 2. & passim.

F13 Pirke Eliezer, c. 42.

Romans 9:18**Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will**

These are the express words of the former testimony: it follows,

and whom he will he hardeneth;

which is the just and natural consequence of what is contained in the latter; for if God could, or he did, without any injustice, raise up Pharaoh, and harden his heart against him and his people, that he might rise up against him and destroy him by his power for his own glory, then he may harden any other person, and even whom he will: now this hardening of men's hearts may be understood in perfect agreement with the justice and holiness of God: men first harden their own hearts by sinning, as Pharaoh did; what God does, is by leaving them to the hardness of their hearts, denying them that grace which only can soften them, and which he is not obliged to give, and therefore does them no injustice in withholding it from them; by sending them both mercies and judgments, which through the corruption of their hearts, are the means of the greater hardening of them; so judgments in the case of Pharaoh, and mercies in the case of others; see (Isaiah 6:10) (Romans 11:8-10); by delivering them up into the hands of Satan, and to their own lusts, which they themselves approve of; and by giving them up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, as a just punishment for their impieties.

Romans 9:19**Thou wilt say then unto me**

That is, thou wilt object to me; for this is another objection of the adversary, against the doctrine the apostle was advancing; and it is an objection of a mere natural man, of one given up to a reprobate mind, of

an insolent hardened sinner; it discovers the enmity of the carnal mind to God; if is one of the high things that exalts itself against the knowledge of him; it is with a witness a stretching out of the hand against God, and strengthening a man's self against the Almighty; it is a running upon him, even upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; it carries in it the marks of ill nature, surliness, and rudeness, to the last degree:

why doth he yet find fault?

The objector does not think fit to name the name of "God", or "the Lord", but calls him "he"; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word "yet": what as if he should say, is he not content with the injustice he has already exercised, in passing by some, when he chose others; in leaving them to themselves, and hardening their hearts against him, and to go on in their own ways, which must unavoidably end in destruction; but after all this, is angry with them, finds fault with them, blames, accuses, and condemns them, for that which they cannot help; nay, for that which he himself wills? this is downright cruelty and tyranny. The objector seems to have a particular regard to the case of Pharaoh, the apostle had instanced in, when after God had declared that he had raised him up for this very purpose, to make known his power, and show forth his glory in all the world, still finds fault with him and says, "as yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?" (Exodus 9:17) ; and yet he himself had hardened his heart, and continued to harden his heart, that he might not let them go as yet; and when he had let them go, hardened his heart again to pursue after them, when he drowned him and his host in the Red sea; all which in this objection, is represented as unparalleled cruelty and unmercifulness; though it is not restrained to this particular case, but is designed to be applied to all other hardened persons; and to expose the unreasonableness of the divine proceedings, in hardening men at his pleasure; and then blaming them for acting as hardened ones, when he himself has made them so, and wills they should act in this manner:

for who hath resisted his will?

This is said in support of the former, and means not God's will of command, which is always resisted more or less, by wicked men and devils; but his will of purpose, his counsels and decrees, which stand firm and sure, and can never be resisted, so as to be frustrated and made void. This the objector takes up, and improves against God; that since he hardens whom he will, and

there is no resisting his will, the fault then can never lie in them who are hardened, and who act as such, but in God; and therefore it must be unreasonable in him to be angry with, blame, accuse, and condemn persons for being and doing that, which he himself wills them to be and do. Let the disputers of this world, the reasoners of the present age, come and see their own faces, and read the whole strength of their objections, in this wicked man's; and from whence we may be assured, that since the objections are the same, the doctrine must be the same that is objected to: and this we gain however by it, that the doctrines of particular and personal election and reprobation, were the doctrines of the apostle; since against no other, with any face, or under any pretence, could such an objection be formed: next follows the apostle's answer.

Romans 9:20**Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?**

&c.] Or "answerest again to God": some have been so weak and wicked as to suggest, that the apostle met with an objection he could not answer, or give a fair solution of, and therefore takes the method he does: but when the several things returned in answer by the apostle are considered, it will appear that he has taken the wisest method to silence such an audacious objector, and that he abundantly clears God from the charge of cruelty and unmercifulness. And he answers "first", by putting the insolent creature in mind of what he was; "nay, but O man, who art thou?" &c. Thou art man, and not God; a creature, and not the Creator; and must not expect that he, thy Creator, will give an account of his matters to thee, or a reason why he does, this or the other thing. Thou art but a man, who in his best estate was vanity, being mutable; thou art a fallen sinful creature, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God for thy sins, and darest thou to open thy mouth against him? thou art a poor, foolish, and ignorant man, born like a wild ass's colt, without understanding, and wilt thou take upon thee to confront, direct, or counsel the Most High, or tell him what is fitting to be done, or not done? "next" the apostle answers, by pointing out his folly and madness, in replying to God. To speak to God in behalf of a man's self at the throne of grace, in the most submissive manner, for any mercy or favour wanted, is an high privilege, and it is a wonderful condescension in God to admit of; and when a man, a good man takes

upon him to plead with God on the behalf of others, of a wicked people, a sinful nation, he ought to set before him the example and conduct of Abraham, who in a like case acknowledged himself to be but dust and ashes, and more than once entreated, that the Lord would not be angry at his importunity; but for a man to answer again to God, which a servant ought not to do to his master, to litigate a point with God, to dispute a matter with him, is the highest instance of arrogance and impudence: "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker, let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth", (Isaiah 45:9) : with their equals, with men like themselves, but let no man dare to "contend with God"; if he should, "he cannot answer him one of a thousand", (Job 9:3) ; for "he is wise in heart", in forming all his counsels, purposes, and decrees; "and mighty in strength", to execute them; "who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" (Job 9:4) . Another way the apostle takes in answering the objection is, by showing the absurdity of a creature's wrangling with God about his make, and the circumstances in which he is made:

shall the thing formed, say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?

reference is had to (Isaiah 45:9 Isaiah 45:10) ; Now as it would be a most absurd thing for the clay, was it capable of speaking, to say to the fashioner of it, why dost thou put me into such or such a shape and form? or for any piece of workmanship to say to the maker of it, he has no hands, no head, no judgment and skill; or for a child to say to its parents, what begetteth thou, or what hast thou brought forth? so absurd and unreasonable is it, for any to say to God, why hast thou appointed me to such and such ends and purposes, and has brought me into being in such a manner, and under such circumstances? There is a story in the Talmud F14, which may be pertinently produced here;

``it happened to R. Eleazar ben Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that he went from his master's house, and he was riding on an ass, and travelling by the sea side, and as he rejoiced exceedingly, and his heart was lifted up because he had learnt much of the law, there was joined to him a certain man that was very much deformed, and says to him, peace be upon thee Rabbi; but he did not return the salutation to him, but says to him "Raca", how deformed is that man! perhaps all thy townsmen are as deformed as thee; he replied to him, I do not know, but go and say,

(ynavev) (Nmwal) , “to the workman that made me”, how ugly is this vessel thou hast made, when he knew in himself that he has sinned; upon this the Rabbi dismounted his ass, and fell down before him, and said unto him, I entreat of thee forgive me; he said unto him, I cannot forgive thee, till thou goest “to the workman that made me”, and say, how ugly is this vessel which thou hast made.”

FOOTNOTES:

F14 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. Massechet Derech Eretz, c. 4. fol. 18. 1.

Romans 9:21

Hath not the potter power over the clay

By the power the potter has over the clay, to shape it in what form he pleases, and out of it to make what vessels he pleases, and for what purposes he thinks fit, which will be most to his own advantage, the apostle expresses the sovereign and unlimited power which God has over his creatures; the passages referred to, are (Isaiah 64:8) (Jeremiah 18:1-6) , in which God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in his hands; now if the potter has such power over the clay which he did not make, only has made a purchase of, or has it in his possession, much more has God a power, who has created the clay, to appoint out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for his own glory, as he sees fit; even

of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour.

The apostle seems to design hereby, to point out to us the object of predestination to be man, as yet not made, but as lying in the mere mass of creatureship, signified by the unformed clay, before put into any shape; and is an allusion to the first creation of man, out of the clay, or dust of the earth, (Genesis 2:7) ; for such a consideration of man best agrees with the clay, lump, or mass, not yet formed, than as already made, and much less as fallen and corrupted: for if men, in predestination, were considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen creatures, they could not be so well said to be made out of it, both to honour and dishonour; but rather since they were all dishonourable, that some were left in that dishonour, and others removed from it unto honour: besides, if this is not the case, God must create man without an end, which is contrary to the principle of reason and wisdom; the end is the cause, for which a thing is what it

is; and it is a known rule, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, and “vice versa”: the end is first fixed, and then the means; for God to create man, and then to fix the end of his creation, is to do what no wise potter would do, first make his pots, and then think of the end of making them, and the use they are to be put unto. To make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, is for God to appoint creatures, which are to be made out of the same mass and lump, for his own glory; which end, his own glory, he determines to bring about by different means, as these following: with respect to the vessels of honour, whom he appoints for his glory, he determines to create them; to suffer them to fall into sin, whereby they become polluted and guilty; to raise and recover them, by the obedience, sufferings, and death of his Son; to regenerate, renew, and sanctify them, by his Spirit and grace, and to bring them to eternal happiness; and hereby compass the aforesaid end, his own glory, the glorifying of his grace and mercy, in a way consistent with justice and holiness: with respect to the vessels of dishonour, whom he also appoints for the glorifying of himself, he determines to create them out of the same lump; to suffer them to fall into sin; to leave them in their sins, in the pollution and guilt of them, and to condemn them for them; and hereby gain his ultimate end, his own glory, glorifying the perfections of his power, justice, and holiness, without the least blemish to his goodness and mercy: now if a potter has power, for his own advantage and secular interest, to make out of the same clay what vessels he pleases; much more has God a power, out of the same mass and lump of creatureship, to appoint creatures he determines to make to his own glory; which he brings about by different methods, consistent with the perfections of his nature.

Romans 9:22

What if God, willing to show his wrath

The apostle proceeds to clear God from any charge of cruelty and unmercifulness, by observing his conduct in time, both towards those he passes by, and towards those he chooses; for in this and the following verse, nothing is said relating to any act of God before time, everything of that kind being considered already. In this verse, the apostle considers the conduct of God towards the vessels of dishonour; and let it be observed, that these are called

vessels of wrath fitted for destruction;

they are said to be vessels, and so no longer considered in the clay, in the mass and heap of creatureship, but as creatures formed and made, and brought into being; and so to be used as instruments in God’s hands, to subserve his ends and purposes, and therefore called “vessels”; and not only so, but “vessels of wrath”, fallen sinful creatures, and so deserving of the wrath of God, and objects of his vindictive justice, in whom he may righteously display his wrath and vengeance: hence they may be so called, being as vessels filled with his wrath; as such who are the instruments and executioners of his wrath are called, in (Isaiah 13:5) , (wmez ylk) , “vessels of his wrath”; and in (Jeremiah 50:25) ; where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here: and they are moreover said to be “fitted for destruction”, as Haman is said to be by the Jews F15; whom they affirm to be the same with Memucan, and ask why is his name called Memucan? and answer, (twnerwpl Nkwmv) , “because he was fitted for punishment”: so these are said to be “fitted for destruction”, that is, eternal damnation; not by God, for this does not respect God’s act of ordination to punishment; but by Satan, the god of this world, that blinds them, who works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and by themselves, by their own wickedness, hardness of heart, and impenitence, do they treasure up to themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, so that their destruction is of themselves: a phrase somewhat like this is used in (Psalms 31:12) , where the Psalmist, under some dismal apprehensions of himself, says, that he was like (dba ylk) , “a perishing vessel”, or “a vessel of perdition”; the Septuagint render it, (skeuov apolwlov) , “a lost vessel”. Now what is the method of the divine conduct towards such persons? he

endures [them] with much longsuffering;

as he did the old world, before he destroyed it; and as he did Pharaoh, before he cut him off: God not only supports such persons in their beings, amidst all their impieties and iniquities, but follows and fills them with his providential goodness, insomuch that many of them have more than heart can wish; nay, to many he affords the outward means of grace, which they slight and despise; externally calls them, but they refuse, loving darkness rather than light, and therefore are inexcusable: now if after all this patience, indulgence, and forbearance, when he could in justice have sent them to hell long ago, he is “willing to show his wrath”; his displicency at sin and sinners, his vindictive justice, his righteous vengeance:

and to make his power known;

what it is he can do, by the utter destruction and damnation of such persons; what man in his senses can ever find fault with such a procedure, or charge it with tyranny, cruelty, and unmercifulness? Romans 9:23

And that he might make known the riches of his glory

That is, his glorious riches, the perfections of his nature, his love, grace, and mercy, his wisdom, power, faithfulness, justice, and holiness; all which are most evidently displayed in the salvation of his people, here called

vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory.

They are said to be vessels, and so considered as creatures, made and brought into being; “vessels of mercy”, and so fallen creatures, and by sin become miserable, for only such are objects of mercy: they are not called so, because deserving of mercy more than others, they are in no wise better than others, and are by nature children of wrath, even as others; but because God of his infinite goodness fills them with his mercy, displays it in them, in the redemption of them by his Son, in the regeneration of them by his Spirit, and in their eternal salvation: and these are by him “afore prepared unto glory”; to everlasting happiness, which he has chosen them to before time, and calls them to in time; to this glory he does not take them, until he has prepared them for it; which act of preparation does not regard the eternal predestination of them to eternal life, but an act of his grace towards them in time; and which lies in putting upon them the righteousness of his Son, and in putting his grace in them; or in other words, in justifying them by the imputation and application of the righteousness of his Son unto them, and by the regeneration, renovation, and sanctification of their hearts, by his Spirit. Now what if God willing to make known his glorious perfections, by displaying his mercy to such sinners, and by preparing them for heaven in a way consistent with his holiness and justice, what can any man that has the exercise of his reason object to this? The whole of his conduct is free from blame and censure; the vessels of wrath he shows his wrath upon, are such as fit themselves for destruction, and whom he endures with much longsuffering and patience, and therefore he cannot be chargeable with cruelty; the vessels of mercy he brings to glory, none of them are taken thither, until they are prepared for it, in a way of

righteousness and holiness, and therefore he cannot be charged with acting contrary to the perfections of his nature.

Romans 9:24

Even us whom he hath called

From election the apostle proceeds to calling, the fruit and evidence of it, taking the same method he did in (Romans 8:30) , with a view to treat of the call of the Gentiles, of which he afterwards gives proof from prophecy; whence it appears to be according to divine predestination, upon which prophecy is founded; for God foretells that such a thing will be, because he has foreordained it shall be. These words are explanative of the former, and show who the vessels of mercy are; they are such whom God calls by his grace. Election may be known by calling, as the cause by its effect, and that without an extraordinary revelation. This may as well be known, as man's adoption, justification, and the forgiveness of his sins; for as all the chosen are, and shall be called in time, so all that are truly called by the grace of God, are manifestly, and to a demonstration, the chosen vessels of salvation: if a man is satisfied of his calling, he ought to be equally so of his election, the one being demonstrable by the other; and for such an one to doubt of it, is his sin and crime. Moreover, the above phrase, "afore prepared for glory", is here further explained; to be afore prepared for glory, is no other than to be called, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; for this is the saints' preparation for glory, before they come to it; and hereby the means are expressed, even sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, through which God appoints his people unto salvation: now this calling is to be understood, not of a call to any office, as of Aaron to the priesthood, of Saul to the kingdom, of the disciples of Christ to apostleship, or of ministers to the work of the ministry; for persons may be called to the highest office in church and state, as Judas to: apostleship, and Pharaoh to the throne of Egypt, and yet have no share in electing grace: nor of a call by the external ministry of the word, which is often slighted, despised, and of none effect; in this sense many are called, who are not chosen: but of a call that is by the powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God; a call that is internal, that reaches the heart, and not the ear only: a special one that is peculiar to God's elect, is by special grace, and is to special blessings, as both grace and glory; it is an high,

heavenly, and holy calling, and is without repentance; between which and glorification, as between it and eternal election, there is a close and an inseparable connection. The objects of this grace follow,

not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles;

not all the Jews, nor all the Gentiles, but some of each; as all are not chosen, all are not redeemed, only some out of every kindred, tongue, nation, and people; so not all, but some only are called by grace: and this is not peculiar to the Jews, it reaches to the Gentiles also; and under the present dispensation, to the far greater number of them.

Romans 9:25

As he also saith in Osee

(Hosea 2:23) , so "Hosea" is called "Osee", as here, in the Septuagint in (Nehemiah 10:23) (Hosea 1:1 Hosea 1:2) . That is, as God says in the prophecy of Hosea, which was given by divine inspiration; and speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, as the spiritual Israel, after God had wrote a "lo-ammi", (Hosea 1:9) , and a "loruhamah", (Hosea 1:6) , upon the people of the Jews; and shows, that he had appointed some from among the Gentiles, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ; since he foretells their calling, long before they were in being; which could have no other foundation than his own eternal sovereign will and pleasure:

I will call them my people, which were not my people;

his people they were before he called them, in some sense; inasmuch as he had chosen them for his people, had promised in covenant they should be, had given them to Christ as his people, and him to be a covenant to them: who, as such, made reconciliation for them, sanctified them by his blood, redeemed and saved them; but then they were not known to be the people of God, neither by themselves, who knew not God, and so could not know themselves to be his people; nor by others, by the Jews, by whom they were called the uncircumcision, sinners of the Gentiles; looking upon the character or the people of God, as only belonging to themselves: God had not as yet laid hold on them as his people, and claimed his right in them, and made known himself to them as their covenant God; he had not avouched them to be his people, nor had they avouched him to be their God; as yet they were not his willing people, nor a holy people, not being formed for himself, by his

mighty grace; nor a people near unto him, with respect to worship and fellowship, but afar off from him. His calling them his people, is his acquainting them with their relation to him, which he had taken them in to himself, of his own grace; for so it is in (Hosea 2:23) : "And I will say unto them which were not my people, thou art my people": in the effectual calling, the Spirit of God is sent down into the hearts of his people, to witness their relation to him, and to work faith in their souls, to receive the testimony; when they reply and say, "thou art my God", (Hosea 2:23) , and so they come to know themselves to be the people of God, of which they were before ignorant; and to be known others, by being made a willing people, in the day God's power upon them, willing to be saved by him in his own way, and willing to serve and worship him in his own ordinances, and according to his own appointment; and by being holy and righteous, having the characters, and enjoying the privileges of the people of God:

and her beloved, which was not beloved.

In the text in (Hosea 2:23) , it is, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy": hence the Vulgate Latin has added this clause to the text, though unsupported by any copy, or other version. The apostle is to be justified in his version, by the Septuagint interpreters, who have rendered the passage in Hosea, "I will love her that was not beloved"; and by the true sense of the word (Mxr) there used, which signifies to love in the most kind, tender, and endearing manner; see (Psalms 18:1) ; where the word is used and so rendered. The sense is not, that God's chosen ones among the Gentiles were not the objects of his love before calling; for their very calling is the fruit, effect, and so the evidence of love before. The love of God is from everlasting to everlasting, invariably and unchangeably the same; he had chosen them in his Son; he had made a covenant with them in Christ, had put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge; he had sent him to die for them, and obtain eternal redemption for them; and all this before he called them, which abundantly proves his love to them: but this love was not manifested to their souls; it had not been shed abroad in their hearts; they had no sensation of it in their breasts; the streams of that river of God had not as yet flowed into their souls; nor were they partakers of the effects of it in themselves; but being called by grace, they feel, they experience, and enjoy that, and all the happy: fruits and effects of it; the loving kindness of God is let down into their hearts

in the effectual calling, and with it he draws them to himself, as a fruit and evidence of his everlasting and unchangeable love to them.

Romans 9:26

And it shall come to pass that in the place

This is another citation out of Hosea, and is to be seen in (Hosea 1:10) , and the meaning is, that in those countries, as here in Great Britain, in the very selfsame place, or spot of ground,

where it was said unto them, ye are not my people;

where were nothing but idolatry and idolatrous worshippers, and whose worship, works, and actions, declared them not to be the people of God:

there shall they be called the children of the living God;

not only children of God, but of the living God; in opposition to their idol gods, their lifeless deities, and senseless statues of gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone, they fell down to and worshipped. The chosen of God among the Gentiles, were from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children; this blessing was provided, laid up, and secured for them, in the covenant of grace; in this relation of children were they given to Christ, and under this consideration of them did he partake of the same flesh and blood with them, and died, to gather them together, who were scattered abroad in the several parts of the world; and because they were antecedently sons by adopting grace, therefore the Spirit of God in effectual calling is sent down into their hearts to bear witness to their spirits, that they are the children of the living God, and to work faith in their souls to believe it; by which grace they receive this blessing, as all others, even the right and privilege of being the children of God; by this they claim it, and enjoy the comfort of it; and so are manifestly, both to themselves and others, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; though this will more clearly appear another day, than it does now.

Romans 9:27

Esaias crieth concerning Israel

The apostle having produced proper testimonies in proof of the calling of the Gentiles, proceeds to mention others; showing, that some few of the Jews also were to be called, according to prophecy, founded upon divine predestination; which, though they are full proofs of the

calling of some from among the Jews, yet at the same time suggest the casting off of the far greater number of them; and which is the apostle's view in citing them, as appears from what he says both here and in the two following chapters. The first testimony is taken out of (Isaiah 10:22 Isaiah 10:23) , and is prefaced or introduced with these words; which either express the great concern of mind and sorrow of heart, with which the prophet spoke them, even with strong crying and tears, seeing a remnant of them only was to be saved; or they show his heart's desire and prayer to God, "for Israel", as the words may be rendered, how that he cried to the Lord for them, entreated him with earnestness and importunity, and wrestled with him on their behalf; or they declare the presence of mind, the freedom of expression, the boldness and intrepidity with which he delivered this message to the Jews, which he knew must be ungrateful to them; in doing which, he run the risk of losing his interest in their affections, if not his life; and inasmuch very probably they did not choose to hear it, but turned away from him, he cried aloud, he spared not, he lift up his voice like a trumpet, as he is bid to do elsewhere, resolving they should hear what he had to say, from the Lord of hosts. This is a form of speech used by the Jews, in citing Scripture; thus, (xwu) (aybnh) , "the prophet cries" F16, namely, in (Isaiah 26:1-21) , which is spoken of the same prophet as here; and again F17 the Holy Spirit (txwu) , "cries, and says", in some certain passage of Scripture; and in another place F18 the Holy Spirit "cried", saying, as in (Joel 3:3) : "they have cast lots for my people".

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea:

this part of the testimony seems rather to be taken from (Hosea 1:10) , which may easily be accounted for; since the apostle had just cited the words in Hosea, and so carrying them in his mind, transcribes this sentence from thence; it perfectly agreeing in sense with the passage in Isaiah he had in view, where it stands thus, "though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea", (Isaiah 10:22) ; that is, though the number of them be such as to be compared thereunto; though they are many as the sand of the sea, as the Targum, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra explain it. This was promised unto Abraham, and had its accomplishment in the days of Solomon, and in after times; they were for quantity, for number, as the sand of the sea, even innumerable; and for quality, being barren and unfruitful, a people laden

with iniquity, a seed of evildoers:

a remnant shall be saved;

that is, a few persons only; (המט (יקרא שאר) , "few are called a remnant", as Kimchi on the place observes; these are the remnant among the Jews, according to the election of grace; the few that were chosen, though many were called by the external ministry of Christ and his apostles; the little city, and few men in it, even the escaped of Israel, he that was left in Zion, and that remained in Jerusalem; the little flock among them, which were as sheep among wolves; the few that entered in at the strait gate, and found the way to eternal life; the few that shall be saved; and these shall certainly be saved, with a spiritual and eternal salvation. These, according to the prophecy, were to return to the mighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah; be converted to him, and so saved by him with an everlasting salvation: God had resolved upon it, whose counsel shall stand; he had promised it in covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; he sent his Son to save these his people from their sins, who is become the author of eternal salvation to them; the grace of God is efficacious and powerful enough, to make them willing to be saved by Christ, and to bring them to him, to venture upon him, and commit their souls to him, to be saved by him; and almighty power is concerned, to keep them through faith unto salvation: so that this little remnant, through the Father's everlasting and unchangeable love, the Son's purchase, prayers, and preparations, and the spirits grace, which works them up for this selfsame thing, shall be certainly and completely saved; though with respect to the difficulties attending it, which could have been surmounted by none but Christ, and by reason of their discouragements arising from sin, temptations, and persecutions, they may be said to be scarcely saved.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Tanchuma, fol. 17. 3. apud Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, p. 14.

F17 Mechilta, fol. 15. 1. Ib.

F18 Megillat Esther, fol. 93. 1.

Romans 9:28

For he will finish the work

This passage has some difficulty in it: some, instead of "work", read "account", and suppose it is an allusion to the balancing of accounts, when the remainder is cut off, which commonly is but little; and so regards the small

number of the Jews that shall be called and saved, as before: others read it "the word", and differently explain it; some understanding it of the incarnate Word, of his being emptied, and made of no reputation, of his being cut off in a very short time, a few years after he had entered upon his public ministry, and of the few persons converted under it; others of the law, of the cutting off, or abolishing the ceremonial law, perfecting or completing the moral law, and abbreviating it, or reducing it into a short compendium; others of the Gospel, bringing in and revealing a perfect righteousness, for the justification of sinners, which the law could not do; all foreign to the apostle's purpose. Those who think God's work, his strange work is meant, his work of punitive justice he will finish,

and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth,

when he cut off and destroyed the greater part of the people of the Jews, and saved a remnant, seem to come nearer the mind of the prophet and the apostle's design, in citing this passage. The words as in Isaiah, I would choose to render and explain thus; (Uwrx Nwylk) , "the absolute", or "precise degree", so Aben Ezra, interprets it, (Mvhm rwzg) , "that which is decreed by God", the decree concerning the salvation of the remnant, (hqdu Pjwv) , "he", i.e. God "shall cause to overflow in righteousness", (Isaiah 10:22) , as an overflowing river; that is, he shall abundantly execute it, he shall completely fulfil it, to finish and cut it short in the most righteous manner, consistent with all his divine perfections; (hurxnw hlk yk) , "for the decree and that determined", so Aben Ezra, (trzgn hrzg) , "the decree decreed" by God, "the Lord God of hosts", (hve) , "shall execute", accomplish, make short and full work of it, "in the midst of all the land", (Isaiah 10:23) , that is, of Judea: so that the words contain a most strong and invincible reason, why the remnant shall be saved; because God has made an absolute decree, concerning the salvation of it, which he will accomplish in the fullest manner, agreeably to his justice and holiness: the (logov) , or "word", the apostle from the prophet speaks of, that should be finished, and cut short and accomplished in righteousness, is the sentence, counsel, or decree, conceived in the divine mind, concerning this matter: hence as the decree of election stands firm and sure, not upon the works of men, but upon the absolute, sovereign, and efficacious will of God; so the salvation of his chosen people is not precarious, but a most sure and certain thing.

Romans 9:29

And as Esaias said before

In the beginning of his prophecy, in (Isaiah 1:9) .

Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed;

the title and character the great God goes by here, is "Lord of sabaoth", that is, "of hosts", or "armies"; the Septuagint often leave the word untranslated, as here and elsewhere, as in (1 Samuel 1:11) (17:45) . He is Lord of the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, whom he brings forth by number, calls by their names, and them to praise him; of the angels, the multitude of the heavenly host, that do his pleasure, fight under him, and for him; and of the hosts of nations, of the several kingdoms of the world, who are all under his government, and among whom he acts according to his sovereign will and pleasure. Kimchi on the place says, he is called so,

``because of "the hosts above", and because of "the hosts below", who are the Israelites, that are called "hosts"; wherefore he would not consume us all, as we deserved:"

no, according to the council of his own will, he left them "a seed"; or as it is in Isaiah, a very small remnant": and so the Syriac here, (adyro) , a remnant"; both signify one and the same, namely, a few persons only: "a remnant" signifies a few, which remain out of a large number; and so does "seed", which is reserved for sowing again, after the whole stock is sold off, or consumed: and the leaving of this small number designs God's gracious acts of reserving in the election of a people for himself; the calling them by his grace in time, and preserving them from general corruption; which if he had not done among the Jews, as Jarchi on the text says,

``of himself, and by his mercies, and not for our righteousnesses,"

we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha;

the cities which God destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven, for their iniquities: had it not been for electing grace, they would have been like the inhabitants of these cities for wickedness; and the case would have been the same with us and with the whole world, had it not been for God's act of election, choosing some to holiness here, and happiness hereafter.

The decree of election is so far from being a door to licentiousness, that it is the true spring and source of all real holiness, that has been, or is in the world; and had it not been for this, there would have been no such thing as holiness in the world; and consequently not only Judea, but the whole world, were it not for this, must have been long before now, like Sodom and Gomorrah, in their punishment.

Romans 9:30

What shall we say then?

&c.] To God's calling of a large number of the Gentiles, and only a very few of the Jews, according to his eternal purposes and decrees; what can be objected to it? is he chargeable with any unrighteousness? must it not be referred to his sovereign will and pleasure? is it not an instance of his grace and goodness, that he calls and saves some, when they were all so wicked, that he might in justice have destroyed every individual of them? or what is further to be said, concerning both Jews and Gentiles? or what can be objected to what may be further observed concerning them? as

that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness;

the very same persons among them, who are, called by grace, and are vessels of mercy, before their calling were without a righteousness, stout hearted, and far from one; being without Christ, and destitute of his Spirit; they were ignorant of righteousness, of the righteousness of God, and of his law, and consequently of what true righteousness is; they were unconcerned about it, and did not labour after it, as the Jews did. They did not pursue and improve the light of nature, about God and things of a moral kind, as they might have done; but held the light and truth they had in unrighteousness, and indeed were filled with nothing else: and yet these persons

have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

The righteousness they attained unto, was not a righteousness of their own, not the righteousness of works, or a righteousness by the deeds of the law, to which the righteousness which is of faith is always opposed; nor faith itself, which is distinguished from it; but the righteousness of Christ, so called, not because that faith is the cause or condition of it, but because the discovery of it is made to faith; that receives it, lays hold

on it, and exercises itself on it; by it the soul renounces its own righteousness, looks to, and depends on Christ's, and rejoices in it. These Gentiles being called by grace, "attained", "comprehended", or "apprehended" this righteousness; not by the light of nature, which makes no discovery, nor gives the least hint of it; but by the light of faith they apprehended it, as revealed in the Gospel; which faith they had not of themselves, but of God; so that the whole of this account is a wonderful instance of the grace of God, and abundantly confirms the observation made before by the apostle, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shows mercy", (Romans 9:16) ; since these persons had nothing in them, disposing and qualifying them for a justifying righteousness, and yet attained one; and the grace appears to be the more distinguishing, by what follows.

Romans 9:31

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness,

&c.] The Israelites, the far greater part of the Jews, who were not called by the grace of God, were all very zealous of the law, called "the law of righteousness"; because the matter of it was righteous, it was so in its own nature; and because perfect obedience to it is righteousness; as also because they sought for righteousness by the deeds of it. They very violently and eagerly pursued after it, they tugged and toiled, and laboured with all their might, as persons in running a race, to get up to the law, and the righteousness of it; and yet Israel, with all the pains and labour taken,

hath not attained to the law of righteousness:

some of them fancied they had, supposing an external conformity to it, to be all that it insisted upon; not knowing the spirituality of it, that it required truth and holiness in the inward parts; and that he that offended in one point of it, was guilty of all, and therefore could not be justified by it.

Romans 9:32

Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith

The question is asked, why they did not attain to that, which with so much diligence they pressed after? the answer is, because, as they did not seek for righteousness in a right place, or object, they sought for it in the law, and the works of it, where it is never to be found by a sinful creature, and not in Christ, in

whom only are righteousness and strength; so they did not seek for it in a right way, by faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and by which only true righteousness is discerned and received:

but as it were by the works of the law;

not by works which looked like works of the law, and were not; but they sought it as if they expected their justification before God was to be by works of righteousness done by them; or as if it was partly by their own works, and partly by the goodness of God, accepting of them for a justifying righteousness. The Alexandrian Copy, and some others, read only, "as it were by works"; and so does the Vulgate Latin version: another reason, or else a reason of the former is,

for they stumbled at that stumbling stone;

meaning the word of the Gospel, at which Peter says they stumbled, and particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; or rather Christ himself, who was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness", (1 Corinthians 1:23) .

Romans 9:33

As it is written

In (Isaiah 8:14) (28:16) ; for the beginning and end of this citation are out of the latter, and the middle of it out of the former. This is an instance of (gldm) , "skipping", from place to place, concerning which the rules with the Jews were F19, that the reader

might skip from text to text, but he might not skip from prophet to prophet, except only in the twelve prophets, only he might not skip from the end of the book to the beginning; also they might skip in the prophets, but not in the law;"

which rules are exactly complied with by the apostle. The beginning of this citation is out of (Isaiah 28:16) :

behold I lay in Zion.

The "stone" said to be laid in Zion, is by the "Chaldee paraphrast" interpreted of a "king"; by R. David Kimchi, of King Hezekiah, and by Jarchi of the King Messiah; and is truly applied by the apostle to Jesus Christ: the layer of this stone is God the Father, who laid him as the foundation stone, in his eternal purposes and decrees, in his counsels and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, in the mission of him into this world, and

in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel: the place where he is laid is Zion, meaning either literally Judea or Jerusalem, where the Messiah was to appear, whither he came, and from whence his Gospel went forth; or mystically the church, where he is laid as the foundation of it, and of the salvation of all the members thereof; though, through the sin and unbelief of others, he proves to be

a stumbling stone, and rock of offence;

which phrases are to be seen in (Isaiah 8:14) , and are spoken of, and ascribed to a divine person, even to the Lord of hosts; and are by the Targumist thus paraphrased, "and if ye obey not", (hyrmym) , "his word shall be for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and a rock of offence", and in the Talmud F20, it is said, that

"the son of David (the Messiah) shall not come until the two houses of the fathers are destroyed out of Israel; and these are the head of the captivity which is in Babylon, and the prince in the land of Israel, as it is said, (Isaiah 8:14) ."

So that, according to the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is properly made use of for this purpose by the apostle, who had seen the accomplishment of it in the Jews; who stumbled at the outward meanness of Jesus of Nazareth, at his parentage, the manner of his birth, his education, the mean appearance of himself and followers; at his company and audience, his ministry, miracles, death, and the manner of it; and so believed not in him, for righteousness, life, and salvation; and thus it came about that they did not attain, or come up to the law of righteousness, or the righteousness of the law: but

whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;

that is, who believes in Christ unto righteousness, who builds his faith, and hope of eternal salvation on him, the foundation God has laid in Zion, and at which the unbelieving Jews stumbled and fell; he shall neither be ashamed here nor hereafter: he shall not be ashamed of his faith and hope in Christ; nor of Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; nor shall he be ashamed or confounded at his appearing, but shall be justified before men and angels, and be received into his kingdom and glory. There is some difference between the passage as here cited, and as it stands in (Isaiah 28:16) , where it is read, "he that believeth shall not make haste": either to lay any other foundation, being fully satisfied with

this, which is laid by God; or shall not make haste to flee away, through fear of any enemy, or of any danger, being safe as built on this foundation; and so shall never fall, be moved, or ashamed and confounded. Some have fancied a various reading, but without any reason. A very learned Oriental critic F21 of our own nation has observed, that the Arabic words “Haush” “Hish” answer to the Hebrew word, (vwx), the prophet uses, and which have three significations in them, “hasten”, to “fear”, and be “ashamed”; the first of these is retained here by the Jewish commentators and modern versions; the second by the “Chaldee paraphrast”, and Syriac translation; and the third by the Septuagint, and the apostle; and they may be all taken into sense, for he that is afraid runs about here and there, and at length is put to shame and confusion.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 1. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. Maimon. Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 14.

F20 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 1.

F21 Pocock. Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis, p. 10, 11.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 10

In this chapter are contained an account of the two righteousnesses of faith and works, a summary of the Gospel of Christ, a description of the grace of faith, in the nature, use, and means of it, and several testimonies concerning the calling of the Gentiles; and whereas the apostle knew that this, as well as what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, that the Jews had not attained to the law of righteousness, but stumbled at the stumbling stone, would be offensive to his countrymen the Jews; wherefore that it might appear that he said this not out of disaffection and ill will to them, he declares his sincere regard unto them, and the great respect he had for them, by calling them “brethren”, by expressing his good will to them, by praying for the salvation of them, Ro 10:1, by bearing testimony of their zeal for God, Ro 10:2, though he faithfully observes to them, that it was an ignorant zeal, of which ignorance he gives an instance, Ro 10:3, particularly in the attribute of God’s righteousness; from which ignorance arose all their misconduct in religious things, especially in the article of justification; hence they sought to be justified by their own righteousness, and rejected the righteousness of Christ, and then points out to them the true end of the law, for righteousness which is Christ, Ro 10:4, which if they had known would have set them right, and which

is another instance of their ignorant and misguided zeal: this leads him on to what he had in view, which was to give an account of the two righteousnesses he had suggested in the latter part of the former chapter, the righteousness of the law, which the Jews sought for and found not, and the righteousness of faith, which the Gentiles without seeking for enjoyed; and this account he gives in the words of Moses, for whom they had the greatest regard: the description of the former is given in his words, in Ro 10:5, which suggest the impossibility of keeping the law, and obtaining life by it, and therefore it is a vain thing to seek for righteousness by the works of it; the latter is described, Ro 10:6,7, by the certainty of it, being wrought out by Christ, who came down from heaven, fulfilled the law, and died, and rose again from the dead; and by the plainness and evidence of it, as revealed in the Gospel, Ro 10:8, the sum of which Gospel is, that whoever believes in Christ and confesses him shall be saved, Ro 10:9, which faith and confession, when genuine, are with the heart and mouth agreeing together; the consequences of which are righteousness and salvation, comfortably apprehended and enjoyed, Ro 10:10, and that the above is the sum of the Gospel, and that there is such a connection between faith and righteousness, and between confession and salvation, is confirmed, Ro 10:11, by a testimony from the prophet, Isa 28:16, which being expressed in such a general manner, as to extend to every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, reasons are given, Ro 10:12, in support of such an explanation of that passage, taken from the equal condition of all, there being no difference between them naturally, from the universal dominion of God over them, and from his liberal communication of grace and goodness to all that call upon him; which last reason is confirmed, Ro 10:13, by a passage of Scripture in Joe 2:32, on occasion of which, the apostle proceeds to treat of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the means of it, the preaching of the Gospel, which was necessary to it, which is made out by a train of reasoning after this manner; that seeing salvation is only of such that call upon the name of the Lord, and there could be no calling upon him without believing in him, and no believing without hearing, and no hearing without preaching, and no preaching without mission, which is proved by a citation out of Isa 52:7, and no success in preaching, when sent, without the exertions of efficacious grace, as appears from the case of the Jews, who had the ministration of the Gospel to them by Isaiah, and yet all did not believe it; as is evident from Isa 53:1, and

seeing the conclusion of which is, that faith comes by preaching, and preaching by the order and command of God, Ro 10:14-17, it follows, that it was proper that ministers should be sent, and the Gospel preached to the Gentiles, and that attended with power, in order that they should believe in the Lord, and call upon his name and be saved; and which method God had taken, and which he had foretold he would take, in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and which were now fulfilling: that the Gospel was preached to them, and they heard it, were matters of fact, and were no other than what should be, or might be concluded, from Ps 19:4, cited, Ro 10:18, and that the Jews could not be ignorant of the calling of the Gentiles is clear, first from the words of Moses, De 32:21, which the apostle produces, Ro 10:19, and from a passage in the prophecy of Isa 65:1. So that this was no other than what Moses and the prophets said should be, Ro 10:20, and the chapter is closed, Ro 10:21, with another passage out of the same prophet in the next verse, showing the rejection of Christ and his Gospel by the Jews, and which justifies their being cast off by him, of which the apostle treats largely in the next chapter.

ROMANS CHAPTER 10

1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 10

Romans 10:1

Brethren, my heart’s desire

The apostle having suggested, that a few of the Jews only should be called and saved; that the far greater part should be rejected; that the Israelites who sought for righteousness did not attain it when the Gentiles did, but stumbled and fell at Christ, and would be ashamed and confounded; and knowing the prejudices of that people against him, therefore lest what he had said, or should say upon this subject, should be thought to arise from hatred and ill will to them, he judged it proper, as before, to express his trouble and sorrow on their

account; so now his great love and affection to them, and which he signifies by calling them “brethren”: for not the Roman believers are here addressed, as if he was telling them how much he loved his own nation; but either the Jews in general, whom he looked upon and loved as his brethren, according to the flesh; and whatever they thought of him, he considered them in such a relation to him, which obliged him to a concern for their good and welfare; or rather the believing Jews, that were members of the church at Rome, whom, besides using the common style of the Jewish nation, who were wont to call all of their country brethren, he could speak to, as being such in a spiritual relation, being children of the same father, partakers of the same grace and privileges, and heirs of the same glory. Now he declares to these persons, that the “desire [of his] heart” was towards Israel, he bore a good will to them, his mind was well disposed and affected towards them, he had a cordial, sincere, and hearty respect for them; and so far was he from being their enemy, that he continually bore them upon his mind at the throne of grace: and his

prayer to God for Israel [was], that they might be saved;

not only that they might be saved in a temporal sense, from these grievous calamities and sore judgments he saw were coming upon them, which he had reason to believe would issue in the destruction of them, as a nation and church; but that they might be spiritually converted, turned from their evil ways, and brought to believe in Christ, whom they had despised and rejected, and so be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: this he might desire not only from a natural affection for them, but as a minister of the Gospel, who cannot but wish that all that hear him might be converted and saved; and as a believer in Christ he might pray for this in submission to the will of God; and especially as he knew there was a seed, a remnant according to the election of grace, at that present time among them, that should be saved, though the larger number of them were cast off. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read “for them”, instead of “for Israel”; not naming them, being easily understood; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions.

Romans 10:2

For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God

A zeal for God; for the being and unity of God,

against the polytheism and idolatry of the Gentiles; for the word of God, the writings of the Old Testament, of which they were zealous defenders and preservers, and which they diligently read and heard explained, and whereby they thought to obtain eternal life; for the law of God, moral and ceremonial, especially for the rituals of the Mosaic economy; for the service and worship of God, they spared no pains, but compassed sea and land to bring in proselytes to their religion; all which the apostle could testify from his own knowledge, and by his own experience, who had been as great a zealot as any of them all. But now whilst the apostle is expressing his strong affection for this people, he is careful to act the faithful part to them, and points out their mistakes, and shows them their faults; which he does in this and the following verse, by observing, that they had a zeal of God indeed,

but not according to knowledge:

it was not well regulated, it proceeded on mistaken principles, and moved in a wrong way, in persecuting the church of God, in doing things contrary to the name of Christ, in putting to death his ministers and members, thinking that hereby they did God good service; which arose from their ignorance of their Father, and of the Son: though they had a zeal of God, they knew neither God nor Christ aright; they did not know God in Christ, nor Jesus to be the true Messiah; they understood neither law nor Gospel truly, and fancied the Gospel was contrary to the law, and an enemy to it; and therefore in their great zeal opposed it, and the professors of it; they were zealous of the law, and of doing the commands of it, but knew not the true nature, use, and end of the law; as appears by what follows.

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness

Either of the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel, which is no other than the righteousness of Christ, and which they knew nothing of, the whole Gospel being a sealed book, and wholly hidden from them; or of the righteousness of God required in the law, they imagining that only an external conformity to the commands of the law, was all that was necessary to attain to a justifying righteousness by it, not knowing the spirituality of it, and that it required conformity of heart and nature, as well as life and conversation; or rather of the attribute of God’s righteousness, the strictness of his justice, the purity and holiness of his

nature: for though they knew that he was holy, just, and righteous, yet did not think he was so strict as to insist upon every punctilio, and to take notice of every little default and defect in obedience; and especially that he had any regard to the heart and the thoughts of it, and required perfect purity there or that he would accept of nothing less than an absolutely perfect and complete righteousness; nor justify any without full satisfaction to his justice: hence they were

going about to establish their own righteousness;

which they would never have done, had they known the righteousness of God, in either of the above senses; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, omit the word “righteousness”, and only read, “their own”, leaving it to be understood, and which is easily done; and so reads the Vulgate Latin version: by “their own righteousness”, as opposed to God’s, is meant the righteousness of works, their obedience to the law, an outward conformity to it, an observance of the rituals of it, and a little negative holiness. This they endeavoured to “establish” or “make to stand” in the sight of God, as their justifying righteousness, which is all one as setting chaff and stubble, briars and thorns, to a consuming fire; as the attempt expresses madness in them, the phrase suggests weakness in their righteousness, which they would fain make to stand, but could not, it being like a spider’s web before the besom, or like a dead carcass, which men would set upon its feet to stand alone, but it cannot; than which nothing can be a greater instance of egregious folly: their “going about” or “seeking” to do this, shows their ignorant zeal, and the toil, the pains, the labour they used to effect it, but all in vain, and to no purpose; as appears by their hearing, reading, fasting, praying, giving alms to the poor, and tithes of all they possessed; all which they were very careful and studious of, and especially to have them done in the sight of men: and so it was that they

have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God;

that is, the righteousness of Christ, so called, because approved and accepted of by God, imputed by him to his people, and given them by him as a free gift, and which only justifies in his sight; and because it is wrought by Christ, who is truly and properly God, and revealed and applied by the Spirit of God. This the Jews submitted not to, because they had no true humble sense of themselves as sinners, nor did they care to acknowledge themselves as such; which submission to

Christ’s righteousness requires and necessarily involves in it; no man will ever be subject to it, till he is made sensible of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and brought to an humble acknowledgment of it; the Spirit of God first convinces of sin and then of righteousness; and because they had an overweening opinion of their own righteousness, which they trusted to, and depended upon, imagining it to be blameless, and to contain all that the law required, and therefore they stood in no need of any other; and as for the righteousness of Christ they had it in contempt, their carnal minds being enmity to him, were not subject to his righteousness, nor could they, nor can any be, without the powerful efficacious grace of God, making them willing in the day of his power. This phrase denotes the rebellion of their wills, against Christ and his righteousness, they acting as rebellious subjects against their sovereign prince.

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the end of the law

The apostle here observes that to them which had they known, would have regulated their zeal, removed their ignorance and set them right, in that which they stumbled at, and fell. By the “law” here, is not meant the ceremonial law, of which, indeed, they were all very zealous, and of which Christ also was the end in many respects; he was the final cause of it, or that for the sake of which it was; it had not been given had it not been for him; all its institutions, ordinances, and sacrifices, were on his account: they were all shadows of him, and he the body and substance of them; he was the end or mark and scope at which they all aimed; every type looked to him, and every offering directed the worshipper to him; he was the terminus of it, to whom it was to reach, and beyond whom it was not to go; it was a schoolmaster for instruction and direction until Christ came, and no longer. He was the fulfilling end of it, every thing in it had its accomplishment in him; and then lastly, he put an end to it, he disannulled it because of its after weakness and unprofitableness; he blotted out this hand writing of ordinances, and entirely abolished this law of commandments; but then Christ was not the end of this law for righteousness; Christ’s obedience to it is no part of justifying righteousness, especially not to everyone that believes, not to the Gentiles who never were under any obligation to observe it: the moral law is here designed, and when Christ is said to be the end of it, the meaning is not that he was the end of its

being given; for that was to be a rule of righteousness and life to men, and a ministration of death in case of disobedience: or that he was the scope of this law, though the Syriac version renders it (hko) , “the scope” of the law is the Messiah, the mark at which it aimed, or which it directs persons to; for the law does not direct to Christ at all, in any way; it requires and insists upon a perfect righteousness, but gives not the least hint of the righteousness of Christ, nor does it in any form direct unto it; by it is the knowledge of sin, but no knowledge of a Saviour from sin; not the law, but the Gospel directs and encourages sensible sinners to believe in Christ and be saved; on the contrary, the law is a killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death; but Christ is either the consuming or consummating, the destroying or fulfilling end of the law. He is the destroying end of the law, not as to the nature, being, matter and substance of it, which is invariable and eternal, and is not, and cannot be made void by the doctrine of faith; nor as to the true use of it; but as a covenant of works, as to the ministry of it by Moses, and as to its curse and condemnation. Though I rather think the latter is here meant, namely, that Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, since it is added,

for righteousness:

for the bringing in an everlasting righteousness; a righteousness justifying in the sight of God; a righteousness sinners wanted, and could not obtain of themselves, and could never be obtained but by a perfect fulfilling of the law: this Christ has done partly by the conformity of his nature, being exactly like that, and what it requires holy, just, and good; and partly by perfect obedience of his life to all its precepts; and also by suffering the penalty of it, death, in the room and stead of all his people; and so the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled by him, and he becomes the end of it, for a justifying righteousness before God,

to everyone that believes:

not to him that works for life, and in order to obtain a righteousness of his own; nor to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile, even to everyone, be who he will, that has faith in Christ; not that faith is either the matter, cause, or condition of righteousness, but this righteousness is only revealed unto, and received by the believer, and can only be pleaded by him, as his justifying righteousness. Moreover, this phrase is descriptive of the persons to whom Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and suggests that for whomsoever he has fulfilled the law,

in order to bring in for them a justifying righteousness, faith in consequence is given to them, to receive and embrace it, and enjoy all the comfort and privileges of it.

Romans 10:5

For. Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,

&c.] In this, and some following verses, an account is given of the two righteousnesses before mentioned, called their own and the righteousness of God; and that chiefly in the words of Moses, which is wisely done by the apostle, he and his writings being in great esteem among the Jews. The description he gives of the righteousness of the law, that is, righteousness which the law requires, and is done in obedience to its commands, is,

that the man which doth those things, shall live by them,

or “in them”; and which is to be seen in (Leviticus 18:5) : “ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them”; from whence it appears, that by “those things” a man is to do, are meant the statutes and judgments of God, not the ordinances of the ceremonial, but the precepts of the moral law; and that the righteousness of the law lies in “doing” and keeping those statutes, not merely externally, but internally, with all the heart, and soul, and strength; the law requires love to God, fear of him, and faith in him, and an inward disposition of the mind towards him, and a conformity of heart and nature to his law, as well as outward obedience; and all this is to be done perfectly and completely in every punctilio the law requires, otherwise no life is to be expected, nor any righteousness to be had by it. The Jewish writers understand the life promised by the law, to be eternal life. The two Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrase the words thus, “he shall live in them”, (amle yyxb) , “in eternal life”; in like manner Jarchi explains them, “he shall live”, (abh Mlwel) , “in the world to come”; to which agrees the note of R. Aben Ezra, who interprets it of lie in both worlds; he says the statutes of the law are life to them that do them in both worlds, for if a man understands the secret of them, he shall live for ever, and shall never die. The life which the law promised to Adam in his state of perfection, who was the only mere man that ever was capable of perfectly fulfilling it, was the continuance of the happy life he enjoyed; the life it promised to the Israelites, at the renewing of it on Mount Sinai, was a long and prosperous life in the land

of Canaan; as for the promise of eternal life, that was made before the world began, in the covenant of grace, and is a peculiar promise and blessing of that covenant, is an entire gift of God’s grace, and never was designed to be enjoyed through men’s obedience to the law of works, but through the righteousness and death of Christ, who is the fulfilling end of the law: hence it appears, that as the righteousness of the law is a righteousness of works done by men, it cannot be the righteousness God imputes, for that is without works, and by which a man can be justified before God; and since the law requires internal and perfect obedience to it, it is certain that it cannot be yielded by fallen creatures; hence it follows, that there can be no life, and so no righteousness by it, the consequence of which, when observed by sinful men, horror, terror, and gloomy despair; the very reverse of which is the language of the righteousness of faith.

Romans 10:6,7

But the righteousness which is of faith

Or “with respect to the righteousness of faith”; the other righteousness before called the righteousness of God, because God is the author of it, here the righteousness of faith, because that receives it,

speaketh on this wise;

the selfsame writer who describes the righteousness of the law in such a manner, that it gives no room to a fallen creature ever to expect life and salvation by it, gives such an account of the righteousness of faith, as forbids all doubting and despair:

say not in thine heart;

let not such a thought enter into thy mind, much less express it with thy lips;

who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).

These words are not properly a citation of (Deuteronomy 30:12 Deuteronomy 30:13) ; but the apostle makes use of some phrases which are there, with his own explications of them; though the difference between them, stripped, of these explications is not very material: in the first clause, “who shall ascend into heaven?” the apostle leaves out the phrase, “for us”; which as to the sense was not absolutely necessary to retain; the difficulty, indeed, seems greater in the latter clause, “who shall descend into the deep?” which in

the text of Moses is, “who shall go over the sea for us?” but when it is considered that the sea is often called the deep, and that sailing on it and over it, is expressed by “going down to the sea in ships”, (Psalms 107:23) ; and moreover, when it is observed that the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases it thus,

“the law is not in heaven that it should be said, oh that we had one of us, as Moses the prophet, who could go up to heaven and bring it to us! nor is it beyond the great sea, that it should be said, oh that we had one of us, as Jonah the prophet (דייחוח לומקי ימא רבא) , “who could descend into the depths of the great sea”, and bring it to us;”

the apostle is to be justified in his expressions. His sense, indeed, may seem to be different from that of Moses, and of the common interpretations of the Jewish writers, as in the above paraphrase and in the following account of them from the Talmud, understanding them of the law F23;

“says Abdimo bar Chama bar Dousa, what is the meaning of that Scripture, “neither is it in heaven, nor is it beyond the sea?” it is not in heaven, for if it was in heaven you must needs go up after it, and if it was beyond the sea, you must needs go over after it; Rabba says, not in heaven is it, you will not find it in him that exalts his knowledge in himself as the heavens, nor will you find it in him that enlarges his knowledge in himself, as the sea; R. Jochanan says, not in heaven is it, you will not find it in those that are of a haughty spirit, nor beyond the sea is it, you will not find it among traders abroad, or merchants.”

Though the apostle’s sense may be brought pretty near to this, after this manner; who shall go up to heaven, or down to the deep, either to bring us the knowledge of the law, and yield an obedience to it which that requires of us, or to give us a full account of the Gospel of the grace of God? there is no room, nor reason, for men to say this in their hearts, or to make a doubt of them, as if they were not done already; to do so, is to deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and risen from the dead, who has given the true sense and knowledge of the law, and has perfectly fulfilled it, in the room and stead of his people, and by whom the doctrine of grace and truth is come, particularly the doctrine of a sinner’s justification

before God; this is brought nigh in the ministration of the word, so that there is no need of such inquiries as these. Moreover, for the illustration of these words, let it be observed, that these phrases are proverbial, and often used to express things impossible, of which take the following instances;

“it is a tradition of the Rabbins F24 if a man says to his wife, lo, this is thy divorce, on condition that “thou ascendest to the firmament”, on condition that “thou descendest into the deep”; on condition that thou passest over the great sea on foot, this is no divorce;”

the reason is, (שאי אפשר) , “because it is impossible”. Again F25,

“if a man says to a woman, if thou wilt “ascend into the firmament”, or if thou wilt “descend into the deep”, lo, thou art espoused to me by this penny; but if thou wilt not go up into the firmament, nor go down into the deep, thou shalt not be espoused; and after that he puts the penny into her hand, lo, the condition becomes void, and behold she is espoused immediately, for the thing is known (שאי אפשר) , “that it is impossible” for her to fulfil the condition.”

So here are forbidden all such thoughts, words, or expressions which carry such a sense as this; who will go down to the deep to fetch such a wretch as I am out of the lowest hell, to deliver me from the curses of the law, and the wrath of God, and bring me out of this wretched miserable condition in which I am? or go up to heaven and carry me there, and put me in the possession of the undefiled inheritance? all this is as impossible to be done, as for a man to ascend to heaven, or go down into the deep: now though the righteousness of the law encourages such despondency and black despair, the righteousness of faith, or the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ’s righteousness, forbids every thing of this kind; assuring the sinner, that Christ is come down from heaven in human nature, that he has fulfilled all the righteousness of the law by his obedience in life, and has bore the penalty of it in his sufferings and death, and is risen again for justification; so that such questions should not be put, nor such despairing thoughts encouraged: besides, to think and speak in this manner, is to set aside the whole scheme of the Gospel, and supposes the person to doubt whether Christ is come down from heaven; and therefore asks, who shall

go up to bring him down? and that he is not risen from the dead; and therefore puts the question, who will go down to the deep to fetch him up? whereas he is already come, has obeyed, suffered, and died, and rose again, and is become the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 55. 1. Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 3. sect. 8.

F24 T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 84. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1.

F25 Maimon. Hilchot Ishot. c. 6. sect. 7. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 40. 4. & 43. 1.

Romans 10:8

But what saith it

The Scripture; so some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic version read, “what saith the Scripture?” the Arabic version, “what dost thou say?” or “what saith he”, Moses? for what follow are manifestly his words, in (Deuteronomy 30:14) ,

the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;

which is to be understood not of the law, for Moses himself is not speaking of the law only, but either of the whole word of God, both law and Gospel; or particularly of the Gospel, which holds forth those special blessings and promises of grace, pardon of sin, and circumcision of the heart, which are mentioned in the context, as what should be bestowed upon the people of the Jews in the latter days; and so is rightly applied by the apostle to the then dispensation, and is to be understood of the Gospel; which was nigh both in the ministration of it, by the apostles, to Jews and Gentiles, and in the application and experience of it; it was not only “in the mouth” of the preachers, but also of the hearers of it, by a hearty and sincere confession; and “in [their] hearts”, being attended with the power of God, and received in the love of it, was truly believed in, and cordially embraced;

that is, the word of faith.

This phrase, (atwnmyhmd hlm) , “the word of faith”, may be seen in the Jewish writings F26; and this shows what word is here meant, even the Gospel so called, because it contains doctrines which are to be believed upon the testimony of God, and particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ

received by faith; and because it proposes Christ as the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in him for life and salvation; and is also the means of begetting and implanting faith in the heart, and without it the preaching of it is of no avail: and it is further described by the ministration of it,

which we preach;

being sent, commissioned, qualified, and assisted by Christ thereunto; which shows the agreement between Moses and the apostles of Christ; for the word which he spoke of, they preached, and indeed said no other things than what the prophets and Moses said should come, that Christ should suffer in the stead of his people, and rise again for their justification; the sum of which is delivered in (Romans 10:9) .

Romans 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,

&c.] That is, if a man shall make a good, sincere, and hearty confession to God, before the church and people of God, and before the world, that Christ is his Lord and Saviour, whom he desires to serve, and to be saved by; and this as arising from a comfortable experience of the grace of God in his soul, and from a true faith in Christ in his heart, wherefore it follows,

and shall believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved;

for this article of Christ’s resurrection includes the several other articles of faith: it supposes his death, and that supposes his life, and the obedience of it; and his life implies his being here on earth, and that his coming down from heaven to do the will of his Father; and this is the rather mentioned, which is here ascribed to God the Father, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, because that Christ is risen again for our justification, with which true faith is principally concerned; for such a faith is intended, not which lies in a mere assent to the truth of this, or any other article of the Christian religion; but which is concerned with Christ for righteousness, life, and glory; and with such a faith salvation is certainly and inseparably connected.

Romans 10:10

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness

The apostle here explains the nature and use both of

faith and confession; as true faith does not lie in the bare assent of the mind to the Gospel, or any truth contained in it, respecting the person and office of Christ, so neither does it lie, as not in the brain, so not in the tongue, but in the heart; it is not a notional knowledge of things to be believed; nor is it saying that a man believes; but it is heart work, a believing with all the heart; such a faith in which all the powers of the soul, the understanding, will, and affections, are concerned, it is a seeing of the Son, a beholding of the glory, fulness, suitableness, ability, and willingness of Christ as a Saviour, with the eye of the understanding spiritually enlightened; it is a going out of the soul to Christ, in various acts, such as venturing into his presence, prostrating itself at his feet, resolving if it perishes it will perish there; a giving up itself unto him, determining it will have no other Saviour, leaning and relying on him, and living upon him; which faith works by love to Christ, moves the affections, stirs up the desires of the soul to his name, and endears him and all that belong to him to it. The use of this grace is, “unto righteousness”; it is not instead of one, for faith is not our righteousness; nor is it in order to work out one, for this grace puts a soul on renouncing its own righteousness; but its use is to receive one, even the righteousness of Christ, which when it spies, it admires, receives, lays hold on, and rejoices in looking on itself as righteous through this righteousness, and so has peace with God through Christ:

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This is to be understood not of confession of sin, though that is proper and requisite to be made, both with respect to the participation, and enjoyment of salvation, particularly pardoning grace and mercy, and to an admission to Gospel ordinances; but of confession of Christ, as appears from the preceding verse, which lies in a frank and open acknowledgment of what Christ is in himself, as that he is truly and properly God, the Son of God, the true Messiah, the Mediator between God and man, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, and of our faith in him, with respect to ourselves, to our pardon, justification, acceptance and salvation in him and through him; in ascribing the whole of our salvation to him, and giving him the glory of it; in declaring to the churches of Christ what he has done for our souls, and in subjecting ourselves to his ordinances. This confession must be made both by words and facts, must be open, visible, and before men; and also real, hearty,

and sincere, the words of the mouth agreeing with the experience of the heart; and such a good profession made before God, angels, and men, highly becomes all that believe with the heart. This was the practice of the primitive saints; yea, all nations own, acknowledge, and profess the God they worship; and should not we confess our God, Saviour and Redeemer? Christ himself confessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, and is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. So to do, makes both for the glory of God, and for our own real good and advantage. Yea, it is “unto salvation”; not as a cause of it, for Christ alone is the author of eternal salvation; but a sincere and well made confession of Christ points out to all that know us where and from whom we expect to have salvation; it is what lies in the way, and is to be taken up by all that believe in Christ, and to be held fast without wavering until we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

Romans 10:11

For the Scripture saith

Of this form of expression, or mode of speaking, (See Gill on Romans 9:17). The passage referred to is (Isaiah 28:16), cited before in (Romans 9:33); the view with which it is produced is to prove the certain connection between faith and righteousness, and confession and salvation; or in other words, to observe that such who cordially believe in Christ, and make a sincere profession of their faith in him, shall be saved. There are some things somewhat different from, though agreeing in sense with, the words as they stand in the prophet; there it is indefinitely said, “he that believeth”, here an universal is made use of,

whosoever,
or “everyone”

that believeth:

which phrases are equipollent, and a certain truth it is, that whosoever believes in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, be he who he will, shall surely be saved: here the object believed in, is expressed

in him,

which is there implied, and may easily be understood of the stone laid in Zion for a foundation, which is Christ; for other foundation can no man lay, and whoever by faith builds on this foundation is safe:

and shall not be ashamed;

neither in this world, nor in that to come; in the

Hebrew text it is, “shall not make haste”; how this may be reconciled, (See Gill on Romans 9:2), (See Gill on Romans 9:3).

Romans 10:12

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,

&c.] Some reasons are here assigned, confirming the apostle’s sense of the prophet’s words, that everyone that believes in Christ shall be saved; for there is no distinction of nations, no superiority on account of carnal descent, or fleshly privileges, no preeminence on the score of the laws and ordinances of the former dispensation, all which are now abolished; nor is there any difference in their state God-ward, all being under sin, and without a righteousness, and all standing in need of the righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him; to which is added another reason,

for the same Lord over all,

or “is over all”: by whom is meant, either God the Father, who is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, (Romans 3:29 Romans 3:30); or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all; and is to be understood, not of his being so merely by creation, but redemption, he having bought with his blood all the elect of God, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; so that he has the same equal propriety in one as another, and they the same claim to him, and the same encouragement to believe in him, for righteousness and life: and moreover, he

is rich unto all that call upon him;

he is not only rich as God, being possessed of all divine perfections and glory, but as Mediator, having the riches of grace and glory in him; and is rich, beneficent, liberal and free in dispensing, pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace to all that come unto him, throw themselves at his feet, implore his grace and righteousness, and call upon him with faith and fervency. Such as these are here designed, and not all that make mention of his name, or are called by it; but who are the true worshippers of him in faith and fear; for the invocation of his name includes all worship of him, and exercise of grace upon him; hence this passage is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name the Lord

This testimony is taken out of (Joel 2:32) and is

brought to prove the truth of what the apostle had just suggested, that all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will find him rich and plenteous in mercy, and ready to dispense his grace and salvation to them: such

shall be saved;

be they who they will, whether Jews or Gentiles; not with a temporal salvation only, but with a spiritual and eternal one; for the words of the prophet refer to Gospel times, as the context shows, and is cited and applied thereunto by the Apostle Peter, (Acts 2:16-21); besides, the deliverance and salvation Joel speaks of, is of a “remnant whom the Lord shall call”, (Joel 2:32); and designs the remnant according to the election of grace, whether among Jews or Gentiles, whom God calls by his efficacious grace; between which call and eternal glory, there is a certain and inseparable connection.

Romans 10:14

How then shall they call on him in whom they, have not believed?

&c.] The apostle having observed, that whoever, Jew or Gentile, believe in the Lord and call upon his name, shall be saved; and that the same Lord was ready and willing to dispense his grace, without any difference to them; suggests, that it was therefore absolutely necessary, that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; that it was the will of God it should be; that what he and others did, was by a divine commission; that they were sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel to them; that hearing they might believe, and so call upon the name of the Lord, and be saved; and therefore the Jews ought not to blame them for so doing, for there was a real necessity for it, since there can be no true calling upon God without faith, no faith without hearing, no hearing without preaching, and no preaching without a divine mission. The first of these is signified by this interrogation. Every man calls upon the God he believes in, and him only; this has been the practice of all men, in all nations; such as have not believed in God and Christ, do not call upon them; it is true indeed, there may be an external invocation of them, where there is no true faith; but then this is not calling upon them in truth and sincerity; as is their faith, so is their calling upon them; as the one is historical, the other is only external; there is no true invocation without faith, or any that is acceptable to God, or of any avail to men; for calling on the name of the Lord,

as it ought to be practised in all religious worship, so it includes and every part of worship as done in faith:

and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

the meaning is, that there is no faith in Christ without hearing of him; as it is in human, so in divine faith, there may be believing without seeing, but not without hearing; so we believe that there were such men as Alexander and Julius Caesar, and other persons now in being, though we never saw them, having heard of them, or had a report made of them, which we have reason to give credit to; so there may be, and is faith in Christ without seeing him with our bodily eyes, though not without hearing of him; for of an unheard of person, there can be no faith in him, because no exercise of thought about him. This is to be understood of outward hearing of the word, and of adult persons only; for that, infants may have the grace of regeneration, and so faith wrought in them by the Spirit of God, without hearing the word, is not to be denied; since as they are capable of the principles of corruption, why not of grace? and also of such persons as have the right and free exercise of the faculties of hearing and speaking, and not of such who never could hear, and speak; for as the Spirit works where, and how he pleases, so he can work faith in the hearts of such persons who never heard the word, and enable them to exercise it on the proper object, and cause them secretly to call upon the name of the Lord, with groans which cannot be uttered. Moreover, this is to be, understood of the ordinary way and means of believing; for though God can, and sometimes does work by other means, and even without any, yet his usual way and method is, to bring men to faith and repentance by the hearing of the word:

and how shall they hear without a preacher?

or there is no hearing without, preaching; there may be reading without it, and this ought to be where there is preaching, to see that what is preached is agreeably to the Scriptures; but there is no hearing the word explained without preaching; explaining the word is preaching. There is no hearing of Christ, and salvation by him, without the preaching of the Gospel; the usual and ordinary way of hearing from God, and of Christ, is by the ministry of the word: this shows not only the necessity and usefulness of the Gospel ministry, but also points out the subject matter of it, which is Christ, and him crucified. They that preach ought to preach concerning the person of Christ, his offices,

grace, righteousness, blood, sacrifice and satisfaction, otherwise men may hear the preacher, and not hear Christ.

Romans 10:15

And how shall they preach, except they be sent

There is no proper, rightful, regular, and lawful preaching of the word without a mission, which is either extraordinary, or ordinary; extraordinary mission was such as the apostles themselves had; who, as they were called to extraordinary service, had extraordinary qualifications, and were sent forth in an extraordinary manner, with a power of doing miracles, and immediately by Christ himself. Ordinary mission is of men to be pastors and teachers, which includes qualifications for the ministerial work; for whom Christ sends forth into such service, he bestows gifts on them, fitting them for it, some more, some less, but all have some; and it also includes a call unto it, which is either internal, and by the Spirit of God, and lies partly in the furniture he gives, and the inclination of the heart to this good work which he forms; and which arises not from a vanity of mind, and a desire of popular applause, and worldly views, and sinister ends; but from a real concern for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ, being willing to deny themselves, and forsake all for Christ, to suitor reproach for his name's sake, and to forego all worldly interest, and secular views: or is external, which is given by the churches of Christ, after due trial and examination of gifts, and a serious consideration of the matter, and that in the most solemn manner; and this is what may be properly called a preacher's mission, and none but such who are in this way sent out ought to preach the Gospel: and to such well agrees, and may be applied, that passage in (Isaiah 52:7) , where

it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things;

which words are not to be understood of the messengers that brought the tidings of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, but of the ministers of the Gospel. In (Isaiah 52:7) it is expressed in the singular number, "how beautiful are the feet of him" and is by some understood of Christ, as it is also by many Jewish writers: thus interpreting the "turtle's voice" in (Song of Solomon 2:12) ;

`` this (say they F1) is the voice of the King

Messiah, proclaiming and saying, "how beautiful on the mountains", &c."

And elsewhere F2 it is observed, that the

`` Rabbins say, great is peace, for when the King Messiah comes, he does not open but with peace, as it is said, "how beautiful upon the mountains""

And says F3 another,

`` one verse says, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings", (xyvmh Klmh vryp) , "the explanation", or meaning is, the King Messiah:"

and some of the more, modern ones F4 of them, own these words are, (xyvmh taybw hlwagh Nynem) , "concerning the redemption, and the coming of the Messiah": and so the worlds, however they may principally regard the Messiah and his ministry, are property applied to the apostles of Christ; and may be rightly understood of any minister of the Gospel, whose business it is to "preach the Gospel of peace": which is so called from the subject matter of it, peace made by the blood of Christ, which it proclaims; from the effect of it, producing, peace and tranquillity in distressed minds, and making men of peaceable dispositions; and from the use of it, which is to direct men to the way of peace, to guide their feet in it, lead them to eternal peace: their work is also to "bring glad tidings of good things"; such as reconciliation, righteousness, pardon, life, and eternal salvation, by a crucified Christ; and the preaching of such a Gospel, and bringing such news, make their "feet beautiful": one should have thought rather their lips than their feet would be took notice of; the reason of this is, partly because of the agreeableness of their walk and conversation to the doctrine they preach; and partly because of their readiness to preach it everywhere, though they run the utmost risk in so doing; and also because of their swiftness, particularly of the apostles, in going through the cities of Israel, and running over the Gentile world with the Gospel of peace, in so short a time as they did; and more especially because of the acceptableness of their message, with which they were sent and ran; see (2 Samuel 18:27) . And so this passage is pertinently alleged to prove, that mission is necessary to preaching; since these words declare the character of Gospel ministers, as publishers of peace, and messengers of good tidings; and express

the message itself, and the nature of it; both which suppose them to be sent by another, even the Lord, under whose authority, and by whose warrant they act; just as ambassadors, heralds, and messengers do, by virtue of a commission they receive from their prince.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

F2 Vajikra Rabba Parash, c. 9. fol. 153. 2. Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1.

F3 Raziel, fol. 23. 2.

F4 Menasseh ben Israel Nishmath Chayim, fol. 41. 2.

Romans 10:16

But they have not all obeyed the Gospel

Who hear it, and to whom it is preached; for though ministers may be regularly sent forth, and rightly preach the Gospel in the purity of it, yet there is no success without the power of God attending it: ministers may preach, and men may hear, and yet not obey the Gospel; that is, cordially embrace the doctrines, and sincerely submit to the ordinances of it:

for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report; or "our hearing", agreeably to the Hebrew word in (Isaiah 53:1) , (wntewmv) , and which designs not the "hearing" with which the apostles heard Christ, though what they heard from him, they made known to men; but the hearing, or the word heard, which others had from them, namely, the report they made in their ministry, of the person and grace of Christ, which was disregarded, when the arm and power of the Lord were not, revealed and exerted: this was the case of the Jews in Esaias's time, and the same in the times of Christ and his apostles, and is always the case, when divine power does not attend the preaching of the Gospel.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing

That is, by preaching; for the word hearing is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse; and designs the report of the Gospel, or the preaching of the word, which is the means God makes use of, to convey faith into the hearts of his people; for preachers are ministers, or instruments, by whom others believe:

and hearing by the word of God;

or "of Christ", as some copies read, and so do the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and intends

either the holy Scriptures, which have God for their author, and Christ for the subject of them; and which furnish the men of God, or ministers of the Gospel, with proper materials to preach; and so hearing or preaching is by them, or else the command of God or Christ, which (rhma) more properly signifies; and the sense is, that men preach the Gospel in obedience to the commandment of the everlasting God, and according to the orders, mission, and commission, warrant and authority, of the Lord Jesus Christ: and so these words are the conclusion, and sum of the whole; that as invocation is owing to faith, so faith to hearing, hearing to preaching, preaching to a mission; whence it follows, that it is the original will of God, to send forth his apostles and ministers, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; that they hearing might believe, and believing call upon the Lord, and so be saved by him: it is a saying of the Jews, (aylt rwbdb heymv) , "hearing depends upon the word" F5.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Zohar in Deut. fol. 110. 3.

Romans 10:18

But I say, have they not heard?

&c.] (rmwa ynav) , "but I say", is a phrase frequently used by the Jewish doctors in disputation, either in forming or answering objections. The Ethiopic version confines these words to Israel, and reads, "have not Israel heard?" whereas they are to be understood both of Jews and Gentiles; the question refers to each, and the answer is,

yes, verily:

which the Arabic renders just the reverse, "no", or "not at all, notwithstanding their sound went into all the earth"; and so makes this an aggravation of their stupidity, and obstinate rejection of the Gospel, that they would not hear it, though its sound reached every place; but the answer is in the affirmative, they did hear. The Jews heard the Gospel in the times of Esaias, and other prophets, though they disbelieved the report of it; they heard it from John the Baptist, and were pleased with his ministry for a while; yea, they heard Christ himself preach it, who spake as never man did, with power and authority, as the Scribes did not, and wondered at his gracious words; they heard the apostles of Christ, who for some time were limited in their ministry to them only, and after their commission was enlarged, were ordered to preach first to them; so that they could not say they had not heard it, and they were left entirely

inexcusable. The Gentiles also had heard it; the apostles were bid to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and at a proper opportunity, they did as the Lord commanded them, and the Gentiles heard the Gospel with joy and pleasure; multitudes were converted everywhere, and churches raised through their ministry, according to the will of God; thus

their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;

the passage referred to is (Psalms 19:4) , which some here, as there, understand literally of the works of nature, the heavens, the firmament, the sun, moon and stars, proclaiming every where the being of God, his perfections, especially his wisdom, power, and goodness; so that the Gentiles were not without hearing of God, even whilst they were destitute of a divine revelation; which was a sort of a prelude of the after extensive spread of the Gospel among them: a voice, or sound, is ascribed to the inanimate creatures; and which is so loud, that it reaches to the end of the earth. There are three voices, the Jews say F6 which go “from one end of the world to the other”; and one of them is נִלְגַל הַמָּוֶה (קוּל) , “the voice of the orb of the sun”: others understand these words of the law, of which many “encomiums” are given in the psalm from whence this passage is taken; and though it was delivered peculiarly to the people of the Jews, yet the fame of it reached the nations of the world, as Moses suggests it would, (Deuteronomy 4:6) ; and the Jews say F7

“that when the law was given to Israel, (wpwo dew Mlweh Pwom) (Klwh wlwq) , “its voice went from one end of the world to the other.”

Or as it is better expressed by Philo F8, and almost in the words of this text,

“the fame of the laws which Moses left, is gone throughout all the world, unto the ends of the earth.”

But certain it is, that the apostle is speaking neither of the light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but of the preaching of the Gospel; and what the Psalmist, literally understood, says of the heavens, that the apostle in an allegorical and mystical sense, or by an argument from the lesser to the greater, or by way of allusion, applies to the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, the luminaries of the world, and stars of heaven; whose ministry, by

this time, had reached the then known parts of the habitable world; as it was to do, before the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Christ’s prediction, (Matthew 24:14) , and as the Apostle Paul testifies it had, (Colossians 1:6) , and in which he himself had a very considerable share, having preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum. There is some little difference between the passage in the Psalms, and as cited or referred to by the apostle, who instead of “their line”, reads “their sound”; which have made some suspect a corruption of the present Hebrew text, or a various reading; and that the Septuagint, followed by the apostle, used a copy which had not, (Mwq) , “their line”, but (Mlwq) , “their voice”, and which was the true reading; but then how came the Chaldee paraphrase to render it by, (Ktm) , “extension”, and Aquila by (kanwn) , “a canon”, or “rule?” and besides, the Masora observes, that this word is no where else read, which is not true of (Mlwq) , for that often occurs; to which may be added, had this been the reading, the Septuagint would have rendered it most probably, as they do elsewhere, by “voice”, and not “sound”: but for the reconciliation of this let it be observed, that the Hebrew word signifies a rule, or plummet, or such a line as builders use in their work, as a direction to them, hence Kimchi F9 explains it by (Mnyynb) , “their building”; and so it may signify any rule, or direction, whether given by writing, and so Aben Ezra F11 interprets it by (btkm) , “writing”, or by word of mouth; besides, the carpenter’s line, when stretched out, and remitted upon the timber, makes a sound, and hence the word might be used for one: all this agrees with the ministry of the apostles, who were builders; and as they worked by a line and rule themselves, so they gave out rules and directions to others, both by writing and preaching, both which reached far and near; this the apostle seems to allude to, in (2 Corinthians 10:13-16) , where he speaks of the measure, line, and rule of their ministry, which reached to Corinth and further, without going into another man’s line: moreover, that great Oriental critic, and our countryman, Mr. Pocock {l}, has shown from the use of the word (hwq) , in the Arabic language, that the word in the Psalms may signify a loud cry, or noise, as well as a line, or rule; so that the psalmist and the apostle may be easily reconciled.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2.

F7 T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1.

F8 De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 657.

F9 In Psal. xix. 4.

F11 In ib.

F12 Not. in Portam Mosis, c. 4. p. 48

Romans 10:19

But I say, did not Israel know?

etc.] Some supply the word “God”, did not Israel know God? verily, they did; they knew the being and perfections of God, the unity of God, and the trinity of persons in the divine essence; they knew the will of God, and the right way of worshipping him; for they were favoured with a divine revelation; to them were committed the oracles of God, and to them belonged the giving of the “Gospel”, did not Israel know the Gospel? yes, they did; they not only heard it, but knew it; not spiritually and experimentally, but nationally and speculatively, and, against the light and conviction of their own minds, obstinately rejected it with contempt: but I rather think this question refers to the calling of the Gentiles, and their own rejection; and the sense is, did not Israel know, that the Gentiles were to be called by the grace of God, and that they themselves were to be cast off? they did know this, at least something of it, though not so clearly as it is now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; but in some measure they could not but know it, since there were such strong hints of it in the writings of the Old Testament, some of which are hereafter produced:

first Moses saith;

not “Moses the first”, as if there was another, or a second Moses, but either Moses, who is the first of the inspired writers, and chief of the prophets; or rather this regards order of time, Moses in the first place says so and so, for other testimonies are after cited; the passage in Moses referred to, is (Deuteronomy 32:21) .

I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

The Gentiles are here designed by “them that are no people”: who before God, and in his sight, as all nations are, were as a drop of the bucket, as the small dust of the balance: nay, even as nothing, yea, less than nothing and vanity: likewise they were no people of any account, of any name; they were mean and contemptible, neglected and overlooked by God himself, and treated with contempt by the Jews, his professing people: and besides, they were not as yet openly and visibly the

people of God; they neither called upon his name, nor were they called by his name; he had not as yet taken from among them a people for his name: these are also meant by “the foolish nation”; Jarchi F13 says, the Cuthites, or Samaritans, are intended; who were neighbours to the Jews, and greatly hated by them: but it may more rightly be applied to all the Gentiles in general, who notwithstanding their large pretensions to natural, civil, and moral wisdom, yet being without a true knowledge of God, Christ, and the Gospel, were a foolish people; and in nothing more did their folly appear, than in their idolatry and superstition. Now the Lord threatened by these people to provoke the Jews to jealousy, and to anger them; and this was but just, and by way of retaliation; for since they provoked him to jealousy and anger, by worshipping strange gods, which plainly declared their want of faith in him, affection for him, and their departure from him; it was a righteous thing in him to provoke them to jealousy of him, as if he had no affection for them, who had been so long, in some sense, an husband to them all; and as about to cast them off; and to anger them, by sending his Gospel among the Gentiles, and calling them by his grace, and making them partakers of his special favours; whereby this prophecy had its full accomplishment: for though the Jews rejected and despised the Gospel themselves, yet nothing more provoked them than that it should be carried among the Gentiles; see (Acts 22:21 Acts 22:22) (1 Thessalonians 2:16) . Now from these words of Moses, the Israelites must needs know, they could not but know that it was the will of God to call the Gentiles, and reject them.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 In Deut. xxxii. 21.

Romans 10:20

But Esaias is very bold, and saith

The apostle here produces another testimony in proof of this, that the Israelites must needs have some knowledge of this truth, the calling of the Gentiles; since a famous prophet of theirs, Isaiah, also spake out with great freedom; he did not mince the matter, or cover it with dark sayings, but with all plainness and perspicuity, and with great courage and intrepidity declared it; though he knew he run the risk, not only of his fame and credit among the Jews, but of his life also, for so doing: the citation is made from (Isaiah 65:1) .

I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me;

here also the Gentiles are meant by “them that sought me not, and asked not after me”; the Messiah; and so R. Moses the priest says F14, that these words are to be understood, (Mlweh twmwa le) , “concerning the nations of the world”. The common people among them sought after the things of the world; their philosophers sought after the wisdom of it; and the more devout and religious among them sought the observance of superstitious rites and ceremonies, and, at best and most, a little morality and external righteousness; but none sought after Christ, for they knew nothing of him, and therefore did not so much as ask after him; they did not ask counsel of him, nor ask concerning him, nor ask for him; not for his coming into the world, as the Jews did, nor for the preaching of the Gospel among them, for it came among them unasked for, unexpected, and undesired, as well as undeserved by them, nor for any blessing of his; and yet such was his grace and goodness, that he was “found” of these persons, in the preaching of the Gospel; which by his kind providence was brought among them, and they were brought under the hearing of it; and by the Spirit of God directed to him in it, in whom they found life, peace, pardon, righteousness, food, and rest, and every valuable blessing; a pearl of great price they found, a finding which can never be lost: he is also said to be “made manifest” unto them, not in the flesh, but in the ministry of the word; in which his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are evidently set forth, and clearly manifested; and besides the outward manifestation of Christ to them by the Gospel, they had no internal revelation of him in their hearts by his Spirit, setting forth to them his grace and fulness, and showing them their interest therein: from this prophecy, also, the Jews could not but have some knowledge of this mystery of grace.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 In Aben Ezra in Isa. lxx. 1.

Romans 10:21

But to Israel he saith

Or against Israel, or concerning Israel he saith in the same prophecy in (Isaiah 65:2) .

All day long I have stretched forth my hands, unto a disobedient and gainsaying people:

very rightly does the apostle apply these words to

Israel, as he does the former to the Gentiles; and just in like manner does the above mentioned Jewish writer, R. Moses the priest, interpret them. The Lord’s “stretching out [his] hands all the day long” to them, designs the ministry of the prophets one after another to them, the preaching of John the Baptist, of Christ and his apostles among them: but they were a stiffnecked and rebellious people, uncircumcised in heart and ears; would have none of his counsel, and despised his reproof; contradicted and blasphemed the word; rejected the Messiah and his Gospel; killed the Prince of life, and persecuted his apostles; so that it was just with God to write a “Lo-ammi”, (Hosea 1:9) , upon them, and cast them off; and, to pave the way for the account of the rejection of these people in the next chapter, is all this said, and these testimonies produced.

ROMANS CHAPTER 11

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved

for the father’s sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 11

Romans 11:1

I say then, hath God cast away his people?

&c.] The Alexandrian, copy adds here, “whom he foreknew”, as in (Romans 11:2) : upon the citation of the above passages out of Moses and Isaiah, relating to the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, the apostle saw an objection would arise, which he here takes up from the mouth of an adversary, and proposes it; in which is suggested, that God has cast away all his people the Jews, according to this count; and if so, where is his covenant with Abraham? what is become of his promises? and how is his faithfulness to be accounted for? and what hope can any Israelite have of ever obtaining salvation? than which, nothing can be thought more injurious to God, and absurd in itself. This was an old prejudice of the Jewish nation, and still continues, that God never would, nor has he cast them away, even in their present condition; it is one of the articles of their creed, received by the Karaites F15, a sect among them, that

“the blessed God (לֹא מָא לְאַנְשֵׁי הַגּוֹלִית) , “hath not cast away the men of the captivity”, though they are under the chastisements of God; but it is fit that they should every day obtain salvation by the hands of Messiah, the Son of David.”

Now to this objection the apostle makes answer; “first”, in his usual way,

God forbid,

when anything was objected which was displeasing to him, abhorred by him, which was not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the truth of his word, and promises, and could by no means be admitted of; and next by observing his own case, which was a standing instance to the contrary; for God had chosen him unto eternal salvation, Christ had redeemed him by his blood, and he was effectually called by grace; and as to his eternal state, he had no doubt or scruple about it; and besides, the Lord had made him a minister of the Gospel, had greatly qualified him for that work, had raised him to the high office of an apostle, and had made him very useful to the souls of many, both Jews and Gentiles; and yet he was one of the nation of the Jews, and therefore God had not cast them all away, as the objection insinuates:

for I also am an Israelite;

according to the flesh, by lineal descent from Jacob or Israel; see (2 Corinthians 11:22) (Philippians 3:5) ; as well as in a spiritual sense:

of the seed of Abraham;

“the grandfather of Israel”; the head of the Jewish nation he was, both of his natural and of his spiritual seed, who is the father of us all:

of the tribe of Benjamin;

a very little tribe, which in the time of the Judges was near being destroyed, and, upon the return from the captivity of Babylon, was very small, as it was at this time; and yet God had not cast away this, much less all the tribes of Israel.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 151.

Romans 11:2**God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew**

The apostle goes on with his answer to the objection, by distinguishing and explaining who he meant by the people God had not cast away, namely, which were “foreknown” by him; for all mankind are in a sense his people, being made, maintained, and supported in their beings by him, yet they are not all foreknown; for were they, they would be all predestinated, called, conformed to the image of Christ, justified and glorified; but some

of them will be cast away, being bad and wicked, and will be sent into everlasting punishment: and though the people of the Jews in general were the people of God, being in a sense chose, known, and distinguished by him from the rest of the world, yet they were not all a “foreknown” people, in the sense the apostle uses the word; wherefore a great number of them were cast away, of which afterwards the apostle speaks largely in this chapter: but then there were a people among them, that were the people of God in a more special sense; they were chosen by him from everlasting to be his people; they were taken into the covenant of his grace as such; they were given to Christ as his people, and were redeemed and saved by him on that account; and were, or were to be called, with an holy calling, when they are openly declared to be the people of God, whom he foreknew: he not merely knew them before, by his general prescience and foreknowledge, which extends to all persons and things; nor foresaw their faith, holiness, and good works, and so chose them for himself; for faith, holiness, and good works, are fruits and effects of electing grace; but he so knew them before, even from all eternity, as that he approved of them, liked them, loved them, and took delight and complacency in them: now these his people he never did, nor never will cast away. Their numbers may be but very small in some periods of time, yet none of them are cast away; God may not immediately arise to their help and assistance in time of distress, or so soon as they desire and expect; he may withdraw his presence, hide himself, and stand at a distance from them; he may afflict them in a fatherly way, when they may think he has cast them off, or cast them away; whereas he never casts any of them away, nor out of his heart’s love, nor out of his sight, nor out of the covenant of his grace, nor out of the hands of his Son, nor out of his family, or so as that any of them shall perish eternally; so far from it, that he takes the utmost delight in them, grants them the greatest nearness to himself, bears the strongest affection for them, and takes the most diligent care of them; whoever casts them out of their affection and company, he will not; the reasons are, because his love to them is unchangeable, his purpose concerning their salvation stands firm and sure, his word and oath are unalterable, his gifts and calling are without repentance; and they are his jewels, portion, and inheritance; they are as the apple of his eye, and continually held by his right hand. The apostle next replies to this objection, by putting them in mind of the case and state of the church of God, in the times

of Elijah; and what judgment that prophet formed of it, and in which he appeared to be mistaken:

wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias?

do ye not know? ye cannot be ignorant who have, and read the Scripture, what it says of Elias, or “in Elias”; that is, as the Arabic version renders it, “in the history of Elias”; in the account it gives of his life and times:

how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying:

that is, how he spoke to God in prayer concerning Israel; and instead of praying for them, as the prophets were wont to do, he was obliged to bring a complaint against them for their idolatry, contempt of the worship of God, and violent persecution of his true followers. The apostle chose to mention this instance because there was some likeness between his case and Elijah’s; and the state of the people of Israel at the then present time, and as in the times of Elijah; for as the Jews in his time killed and persecuted the prophets of the Lord, so in the present time they had killed the Lord Jesus Christ, and persecuted his apostles; and as Elijah, though one of their own prophets, was obliged to make intercession against them, so the apostle, though one of their own countrymen, could not but speak against them, and of their just rejection by God: and this he observes, to soften their resentments against him, when so great a prophet had done so before him: and this the Jews themselves own {p}, for they say that Elijah (ישראל) (מדרב ר קטגוריא ל), “brought an accusation against Israel”: and it is observed by another F17 that

“`coals are said of Isaiah and Elijah, because they delivered an accusation against Israel: one called them a people of unclean lips, and the other said, for they have forsaken thy covenant:”

which is the apostle’s sense.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Laniado in 1 Kings xix. 14.

F17 Jarchi in Isa. vi. 6.

Romans 11:3**Lord, they have killed thy prophets**

By the order of Jezebel, wife of Ahab king of Israel, (1 Kings 18:4) . This sin of slaying the prophets of the Lord is charged upon the Jews by Christ, (Matthew 23:31 Matthew 23:37) , and by the apostle, (1 Thessalonians 2:15) . In the text in (1 Kings 19:14) , it is added,

“with the sword”: which expresses the manner of death they were put to; and this clause is there put after the following, according to a rule of transposition among the Jews; (See Gill on Matthew 27:10).

And digged down thine altars;

either the altars which the patriarchs had formerly built, and were still in being; and though not used, yet were kept and had in great veneration; wherefore the pulling of them down was done in contempt of them, and of the worship of God, which had been formerly performed there; or else such altars, which the religious among the ten tribes built, since the times of Jeroboam, who forbade them to go up to Jerusalem, but ordered them to go to Dan or Bethel; which they not choosing to do erected altars in different places for divine service, and which the Jews F18 say were allowed; for from that time, the prohibition of altars at other places than at Jerusalem ceased:

and I am left alone:

meaning either as a prophet, not knowing that Obadiah had hid an hundred prophets by fifty in a cave, (1 Kings 18:4) ; or else as a worshipper of the true God, imagining that he was the only person in Israel, that had a true zeal for the Lord of hosts:

and they seek my life;

lay in wait for it, Jezebel by her emissaries being in quest of him; it is added in (1 Kings 19:14) , “to take it away”; for she had sworn by her gods, that by the morrow about that time, his life should be as the life of one of the prophets of Baal he had slain; and in one copy it is added here.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Kimchi in 1 Kings xviii. 30.

Romans 11:4**But what saith the answer of God unto him?**

&c.] The divine response, or oracle, the (בה קול) , “Bath Kol”, or voice from heaven; the still small voice of the Lord, which Elijah heard, (1 Kings 19:12) :

I have reserved to myself;

for his worship and service, to be partakers of his grace, inheritors of his kingdom, to show forth his praise, and for his name’s sake, for his honour and glory: these he reserved in eternal election, in the council and covenant of peace; separated them in time from others by his grace, and preserved them from the general

defection and apostasy: even

seven thousand men:

meaning either that precise and exact number, which was but small in comparison of the very large multitude of persons that were in the ten tribes, or else a certain number for an uncertain:

who have not bowed the knee;

a sign of reverence and adoration:

to [the image] of Baal;

Jezebel's god, the god of the Zidonians; a name common to many of the "deities" of the Gentiles, and signifies "lord", or "master"; we read of "Baalim" in the plural number, for there were "lords many" of this name: in the Greek text the article is of the feminine gender, wherefore our translators have supplied the word image. This word has, in the Septuagint version, sometimes a feminine article as here; see (2 Kings 21:3) (Jeremiah 2:8 Jeremiah 2:23 Jeremiah 2:28) (7:9) (11:13) (Jeremiah 12:16) (19:5) (23:27) (Jeremiah 32:29 Jeremiah 32:35) (Hosea 2:8) (13:1) ; but in (1 Kings 19:18) , from whence this passage is taken, the article is masculine, as it is also in (Judges 2:11 Judges 2:13) , and in other places. This deity being either of both sexes, or of no distinguished sex; or it may be, the reason it has so often a feminine article is, because it was a young heifer, or in the form of one; so in the history of Tobias 1:5, it is said, that "all the tribes which apostatized together sacrificed", (th baal th damalei) , "to Baal the heifer". The apostle's view in mentioning this instance is to show, that when the church and cause of God are at the lowest, God has always some true worshippers of him; and that he never casts away his foreknown people, whose numbers are generally more than they are thought to be by the saints themselves; good men, as Elijah, may be mistaken in this matter; all which he accommodates to the then present state of God's people, in (Romans 11:5) .

Romans 11:5

Even so then at this present time also

In which the apostle lived, the time of preaching the Gospel, the accepted time, the day of salvation, which then was, and also now is; at that time when the Gospel was sent unto the Gentiles, and God took out of them a people for his name; when multitudes of them were converted, and embraced the faith of Christ; and when the Jews in general had rejected the Messiah, killed the

Lord Jesus, persecuted his apostles, and contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel; yet still God had made a reserve of some among them, for himself:

there is a remnant;

alluding either to (Isaiah 10:21 Isaiah 10:22) , or to the oracle delivered to Elijah, saying, "I have reserved", or "left", &c. (1 Kings 19:18) (Romans 11:4) , that as God had reserved for himself, in Elijah's time, a number of persons, who had not gone into the idolatrous worship of Baal, when the greater part of the Israelites did, so he had taken care to make a like reserve in the apostle's time, when the bulk of the Jewish nation had refused the Messiah, and despised his Gospel. This is a further proof, that God had not cast away all the people of the Jews; and that as Elijah was not the only worshipper of the true God in his time, so the apostle was not the only instance of grace among that people now; there was a number of them; the number of the disciples after our Lord's ascension, was an hundred and twenty; upon the first sermon preached by Peter, three thousand were converted, and added to them; after that, they are said to be about five thousand, and still multitudes were added, both of men and women, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; so that before the dispersion of the church at Jerusalem by a persecution, there might be at least such a number called by grace, as God had reserved in Elijah's time; though these, when compared with the generality of the nation, which remained in unbelief, were but a few, and therefore called a "remnant", or a "reserve", as the word may be rendered; for these were a set of men, whom God had reserved and preserved in his Son, and in the covenant of his grace, from everlasting; and had kept a watchful eye over them in time, reserved them in his providence, and saved them to be called; and by calling them, had reserved them by his grace, and preserved them by his power, from the general unbelief, impenitence, blindness, and ignorance, which prevailed over the people of the Jews; which reserve was not owing to their superior goodness, they being in no wise, with respect to nature, birth, and privileges, better than those who were not reserved; nor to the disposition of their minds and wills, their minds and consciences being defiled, and their wills naturally as obstinate and perverse as others; nor to any good works done by them, since works before calling are not properly good, and those after are the fruits of that grace: but this reverse was made,

according to the election of grace;

God's choice of these persons before the world was, which is the source and spring of all the blessings of grace, both in time eternity: hence these persons were put into the hands of Christ, secured in an everlasting covenant, took special care of by divine Providence, were called by grace, justified, sanctified, and at last glorified: and this choice is owing to grace, for not men's choice of God's grace, but God's choice, owing to his, own grace, is here meant. The Pelagians would have it, that this election is the choice which man makes of the grace of God: whereas such is the enmity of mans nature, and will against God and his grace, that he would never make choice of that, if the grace of God did not first make choice of him, and lay hold upon him: grace here, does not design the object of the choice, but the cause, spring, and motive of it, which is not any habit or quality in men, as faith and holiness, for these are fruits and effects of electing grace, and so not causes, motives, or conditions of it, but the free love and favour of God in his own heart; and shows the sovereignty and freeness of election, which is no ways depending on the will and works of men, but upon the sovereign good will and pleasure of God.

Romans 11:6

And if by grace, then is it no more of works

Upon election, being called "the election of grace", the apostle forms an argument, showing the contrariety and inconsistency of grace, and works, in that affair; proving, that it must be by the one or the other: and if by the one, then not by the other; and that these two cannot be mixed and blended together in this matter. If election is "by grace", as it certainly is; for no other reason can be given why God has chose one, and not another, but his own sovereign pleasure, or that free favour and unmerited love, with which he loves one and not another; and not because they are better, or had done or would do better things than others; "then it is no more", or not at all, for it never was "of works", was not influenced by them, does not arise from them, for it passed before ever any were done; and those that are done aright spring from it, and therefore could never be the rule and measure, causes, motives, and conditions of it;

otherwise grace is no more grace;

for

"`grace (as Austin has long ago observed) is not grace, unless it is altogether freed;"

it will lose its nature, and ought to change its name, and be no more called or reckoned grace, but a due debt; and a choice of persons to salvation should be thought, not to be what God is free to make or not, but what he is obliged to, as a reward of debt to men's works:

but if it be of works, then it is no more grace;

if election springs from, and depends upon the works of men, let no man ascribe it to the grace of God; for there is nothing of grace in it, if this be the case:

otherwise work is no more work;

that will free gift: but these things are contrary to one another; and so unalienable and unalterable in their natures, that the one cannot pass into the other, or the one be joined with the other, in this or any other part of man's salvation; for what is here said of election, holds true of justification, pardon of sin, and the whole of salvation. The Ethiopic version applies it to justification.

Romans 11:7

What then?

&c.] What can be said to the point the apostle is upon? it is as clear as the sun, out of all question, that God has not cast away all the people of the Jews, nor any whom he foreknew, any age or period of time; neither in the time Elijah, nor in the apostle's, he always having a reserve of some for himself; which reserve is owing to a previous choice of them, and that previous choice to ascribed not to any works of theirs, but to his free grace and sovereign pleasure. Indeed

Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for;

that is, carnal Israel, the body and bulk of that people; who sought for life and righteousness by their obedience to the law, and which they in general were in quest of, and pursuit after, but did not obtain, though, some of them might imagine they did; for the thing was impracticable and impossible, no life nor righteousness are ever to be had by the law of works; they did not obtain life and righteousness, because they sought them in a wrong place and in a wrong way; they sought them not by faith in Christ Jesus, where they are only to be had, but by their own works, which fall abundantly short of procuring them for them:

but the election hath obtained it.

The apostle divides Israel into two parts, "the election

and the rest”: by “the election” he means, elect men, the remnant among them, whom God had reserved for himself; just as “circumcision” designs circumcised persons, and “uncircumcision” uncircumcised persons, and “calling” called ones, and “righteousness” righteous men and women; see (Romans 3:30) (1 Corinthians 1:26) (2 Peter 3:13) . Now these chosen ones obtained mercy, grace, life, and righteousness in Christ, as the apostle himself did, who was one of them; and that by virtue, and in consequence of their election, for which reason the word is here used; hence mercy was shown them, grace was bestowed upon them, the righteousness of Christ was imputed to them, faith was given them, holiness was wrought in them, and they entitled to, and made meet for eternal life: these among Israel then obtained such favours and blessings; and so God’s elect, in all ages and nations, obtain the same things, and will obtain; for the purpose of God according to election stands sure, his word and oath are immutable, his covenant inviolable, his grace inalienable, and his power omnipotent:

and the rest were blinded:

the non-elect, or those who were not chosen and reserved, to whom Christ was “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence”; and who “stumbled at the word” of the Gospel, “being disobedient” to the divine revelation, “whereunto they were appointed”, (1 Peter 2:8) ; hence they obtained no mercy, grace, faith, life, righteousness, and eternal salvation, but were “blinded”; left in that native blindness and ignorance, in which they were born and brought up; were blinded by themselves wilfully more and more; as they knew not the Messiah, so neither would they understand; they sinned wilfully against light knowledge; they shut their eyes against all that evidence and demonstration given, of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, by his doctrines and miracles; and they were blinded by Satan, the god of this world, by whom they were led captive; who wrought effectually in them, and stirred up the malice and enmity of their minds against Christ and his Gospel; for they were of their father the devil, and his lusts they would do; and they were also blinded by God himself, so that they could not believe; for after all this, it was but just with God to give them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

Romans 11:8

According as it is written

In (Isaiah 29:10) (6:10) which passages the apostle

seems to refer to, though it is not exactly word for word as here, yet the sense is the same:

God hath given them the spirit of slumber;

or of stupidity and insensibility, so that they were as persons in a deep sleep; their senses locked up, without any knowledge of, or concern about, the danger they were in; having no sense of sin, or of the need of a Saviour; or of their being upon the borders of eternal ruin and damnation, or of any ways and means to escape it; but careless and secure, as persons fast asleep in the midst of the sea, or upon the top of a mast, who, when stricken and beaten, feel it not; but if by jogging are awaked at all, immediately return to sleep again, and so sleep the sleep of eternal death:

eyes that they should not see;

which being closed by the deep sleep and stupidity of mind they were judicially given up to, could see no beauty in Christ, wherefore they should desire him; none of the glories and excellencies of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; noticing amiable and agreeable in his Gospel, and the truths of it; nor had they any light in the prophets of the Old Testament, which were so remarkably fulfilled in him; their minds were blinded, a vail was upon their hearts, and which remains to this day:

and ears that they should not hear;

for persons in a sleep, as their eyes are closed that they cannot see, so their ears are stopped that they cannot hear: and thus it was with these Jews, the awful judgment being upon them; they were uncircumcised in heart and ears; they were like the deaf adder, stopping their ears to the charming voice of Christ in the Gospel; and being given up in a judicial way, could neither understand his speech, nor hear his word: and this spirit of stupidity and insensibility, as it appeared in the times of Isaiah, so it continued

unto this day;

the then present time, in which the apostle lived; and has continued ever since, at least in part, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in. These passages, with some others following, are produced by the apostle out of their own prophets, to take off their resentment against him; and lest, he should be thought to be severe upon them, when he said no more of them, but what had been prophesied long before concerning them. So Jarchi on (Isaiah 29:10) ; says, that Isaiah prophesies (larvy yevwp le) , “concerning the transgressors of

Israel”.

Romans 11:9

And David saith

That is, Christ by the mouth of David, or David in the person of Christ; for the psalm out of which the following words are taken is a prophecy of the Messiah, as appears from some passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to Christ; compare (Romans 11:4) with (John 15:25) , and (Romans 11:9) with (John 2:17) (Romans 15:3) , and (Romans 11:21) with (John 19:28 John 19:29) ; and what are here cited are not so much imprecations, as predictions of what should befall the Jews, by way of recompense for their ill usage of the Messiah, in giving him gall for meat, and vinegar for drink, (Matthew 27:34) :

let their table be made a snare, and a trap and a stumbling block.

By their “table” may be meant, the altar; see (Malachi 1:7 Malachi 1:12) ; and the sacrifices offered up upon it, their meat offerings and drink offerings, and all others; likewise the laws concerning the difference of meats, and indeed the whole ceremonial law may be intended, which lay in meats and drinks, and such like things: now the Jews placing their justifying righteousness before God, in the observance of these rites and ceremonies, and imagining that by these sacrifices their sins were really expiated and atoned for, they neglected and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ, but went about to establish their own; so that that which should have led them to Christ, became an handwriting of ordinances against them, and rendered Christ of no effect to them: moreover, the sacred writings, which are full of spiritual food and divine refreshment, the prophecies of the Old Testament, which clearly pointed out Christ, not being understood, but misapplied by them, proved a trap, a snare, and a stumbling block to them; so that they rejected the true Messiah, which issued in their utter ruin and destruction: yea, the preaching of the Gospel, the salutary truths and wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, were a stumbling block to the Jews, nay, even the savour of death unto death. Though these words may be literally understood of their table mercies, the necessary provisions of life, their common food and drink, of which they had great scarcity in their last wars; so that they not only by wicked methods stole it from one another, but ate what was forbidden by their law, and what was abhorrent to nature, as one is said

to eat her own child; nor is it to be overlooked what is suggested by some, that the passover may be meant by their “table”; which was their grand yearly feast, and which they were eating F19 when they were surrounded and taken by the Roman army, like birds in a net, or beasts in a trap: and all this as

a recompense to them;

a just judgment upon them, by way of retaliation for their ill treatment of Christ when on the cross, giving him gall and vinegar for his meat and drink.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9.

Romans 11:10

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see

Which is to be understood not literally of their being struck with blindness, as the men of Sodom were by the angels, and as Elymas the sorcerer was by the Apostle Paul; but mystically, of the eyes of their understandings being darkened, as they were by themselves and by Satan, and judicially by God; so that they could not see into the true same of the prophecies and promises concerning Christ; and how all the characters of the Messiah met in Jesus of Nazareth; their eyes were so blinded, that they could see no beauty nor comeliness in him; no excellency in his person, nothing wonderful in his works, nor amiable in his doctrine; nay, not only spiritual things, the things of the Gospel, were hid from the most wise and prudent among them, from their doctors and Rabbins, but also the things which regarded their temporal peace and happiness were hid from their eyes; their eyes were not only darkened with respect to things spiritual and evangelical, but even with regard to things natural and civil: never did a people act more imprudently for their temporal safety and welfare, or appear so infatuated in all their conduct, as they did, as the history of their wars does abundantly declare:

and bow down their back alway;

which may denote their subjection and bondage to the Romans, when taken and carried captive by them; who laid very heavy burdens on them, which bowed down their backs indeed, multitudes of them being condemned to the mines; or this may design the general disposition of the minds of these people, which are bowed to the earth, for they mind nothing but earth and earthly things; the acquiring of which they are bent upon at any rate, and are infamous for their earthly

mindfulness, covetousness, extortion, usury, tricking, and over reaching; or this phrase may be expressive of that trembling, distress, horror, and despair, which shall seize them; especially when the son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, and they that have pierced him shall behold him, and wail because of him; for in the Psalms the words are, “make their loins continually to shake”, (Psalms 69:23)

Romans 11:11

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?

&c.] This is an objection, which the apostle takes from the mouth of an adversary; and the purport of it is, you say that the people of the Jews being blind, have stumbled at Christ and his Gospel, as was prophesied of them, and to which they were appointed; pray what were God’s view and end in this? was it that they should fall and perish eternally? if it be so, is not this doing himself, what he forbids others, namely, “to put a stumblingblock before the blind?” (Leviticus 19:14) , and can he be excused from cruelty, and rejoicing at the misery of others? or is their stumbling permitted, that they should “all” fall through unbelief, and be cast away? and so it is an objection of the same kind with (Romans 11:1) ; or since they have stumbled, and have thereby fell into a forlorn and miserable condition, are they always to continue in it, as the last clause in the above cited passage suggests? To which the apostle answers,

God forbid;

neither of these are to be admitted of. The end which God had in view, in suffering the Jews to stumble and fall, was not their destruction, but rather the salvation of the Gentiles; and especially not the destruction of “all” of them, blindness had only happened “in part” to them; for there was a remnant among them according to the election of grace, which should be saved; a chosen number, which obtained life and righteousness by Christ; yea, a fulness of them, how small soever their number might be now, which should be brought in; and still less that they should always continue in this sad condition, their unbelief had brought them into; for the time would come, when there would be a receiving of them as life from the dead, when all Israel should be saved. And at present there appeared nothing ill in view,

but rather through their fall, salvation is come

unto the Gentiles.

That is, the Gospel; which is sometimes called salvation, the Gospel of our salvation, the word of “salvation”; because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ, and is the power of God unto it; or a means made effectual by the power of God to convince persons, both of their need, and of the worth of it, and also a means of the application of it to them, by the Spirit of God: now this came to the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, according to the orders and command of Christ; and that through the fall of the Jews, their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah; for the Gospel was first preached to them, but they contradicting and blaspheming it, the apostles turned to the Gentiles, and preached it to them, as the Lord had commanded them: and thus they came to be acquainted with the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, and to have it powerfully applied to their souls by the Spirit of God; when salvation might be said to “come” to them, in such sense as our Lord says it did to Zacchaeus and his house, (Luke 19:9) : and another end is to be answered hereby; which is

for to provoke them to jealousy:

that is, to provoke the Jews to jealousy; not in an ill sense, as in (Romans 10:19) , and as they were provoked upon the first sending of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling of them, when they discovered a great deal of envy, wrath, and bitterness; but in a good sense, as will appear in the latter day, when being convinced of their sin in rejecting the Messiah, and observing the many advantages the Gentiles have received by embracing him, and they have lost by their contempt of him, will be provoked to an holy emulation of them, and be stirred up through their means to seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and thus things will wind about in Providence. The fall of the Jews makes way for the Gospel among the Gentiles; and this having had its effects with them, will be a means of putting the Jews upon serious thoughts about, and a studious inquiry after, the true Messiah, and salvation by him; all which is a full answer to the question, and the objection contained in it.

Romans 11:12

Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world

By “the world”, as is clear from the next clause, is meant the Gentiles; who were frequently called so by the Jews, who reckoned themselves to be “the church”, and all the nations round about them, “the world”; which

observation may serve to illustrate other passages of Scripture; see (John 3:16) (2 Corinthians 5:19) (1 John 2:2) ; now the fall of the Jews, which was a lessening of them, was the riches of the Gentiles;

and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles;

the number of the true believers in Christ among them were very few, the generality of them received him not, but stumbled at him, and fell through unbelief; but the few that did believe were the means of carrying and spreading the Gospel, which is, “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, (Ephesians 3:8) , in the Gentile world: thus at first a persecution being raised against the church at Jerusalem, the ministers of the Gospel were scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching the word; and afterwards the Jews behaving in a very indecent manner towards the apostles of Christ, they turned in a manner wholly to the Gentiles; and thus by the means of a few, a diminutive company, of which the Apostle Paul was one, the Gospel, the pearl of great price, treasure hid in a field, and put into earthen vessels, was carried into the Heathen world, and by it they were enriched. This handful of men that went out of Judea, were the means of converting vast numbers, large multitudes of souls among the Gentiles, which may be also designed by “riches”: this word sometimes signifying plenty, see (Romans 2:4) ; and also of enriching them with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and of directing them to Christ, who has durable riches, treasures of wisdom and knowledge, riches of grace, and riches of glory. Now the apostle argues, that if such a small number of the Jews who embraced Christ, were of so much advantage to the Gentiles,

how much more their fulness?

when converts to Christ among them will be as the sand of the sea, a nation of them shall be born again at once, and all Israel be saved. This will be a great accession to the Gentile church, bring much glory to it, contribute greatly to its welfare, and be a means of establishing their faith, and of putting fresh life and vigour into them, and of inspiring them with more zeal for Christ, and for his honour and glory.

Romans 11:13

For I speak to you Gentiles

The church at Rome, as the primitive churches for the most part did, consisted of Jews and Gentiles;

hence the apostle sometimes addresses the one, as in (Romans 2:17 Romans 2:25) (7:1) , and sometimes the other, as here; and this he does to observe unto them the grace and goodness of God, in enriching them with the Gospel of salvation; and that they might not despise the Jews, from whom it first came out, and through whose fall it came to them, and was preached among them by some of that nation:

in as much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles.

He was ordained and set apart by God, in his eternal purposes, to be a teacher of the Gentiles; he was sent immediately by Christ to bear his name among them, though not among them only, to the exclusion of the people of Israel; he chiefly preached the Gospel to them, though sometimes to the Jews also; and the success of his ministry was mostly among the uncircumcision, though he sought by all ways and means to gain both Jews and Gentiles: hence he addresses the Gentiles with greater freedom and boldness, because he was their apostle, and had been so useful among them; and is a reason why we Gentiles should have a special regard to his writings; for though every word of God is pure, and all Scripture is divinely inspired, and is profitable on one account or other; nor is any part of it to be slighted and neglected; yet as Paul’s epistles are written chiefly to the Gentile churches, excepting that to the Hebrews, and which some question whether it is his, they ought especially to be attended to by us; though, alas, of all the inspired writings they are had in the least esteem:

I magnify mine office:

not himself, for he was not of a self-exalting spirit, but humble and lowly minded, ready at all times to own himself to be less than the least of saints and the chief of sinners; but his office, which he had received from Christ, as an instance of his grace and favour. This was magnified partly by the miracles, signs, and wonders done by him, in proof, and for the confirmation of his apostleship; and partly by his constant, diligent, and faithful preaching of the Gospel: as also by the unwearied pains he took to spread it far and near; and likewise by the numbers of souls he was the means of bringing to the knowledge of Christ; and it was no small accession of glory to his office, as an apostle of the Gentiles, that he was an instrument of the conversion of many among the Jews.

Romans 11:14

If by any means I may provoke to emulation

What he had in view, even in discharging his office among the Gentiles with so much labour, assiduity, and indefatigableness, was, that if possible he might stir up the Jews to emulate and imitate the Gentiles, in seeking after Christ; for these he means when he says,

them which are my flesh;

they being his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, for it was common with the eastern nations to call such persons their flesh; see (Genesis 29:14) (37:27) (Isaiah 58:7) ; and carries in it a reason why he was so solicitous for their welfare, because of the relation of them to him, and the natural affection he bore towards them; and his hope was, that they seeing the nations of the earth blessed in the promised seed, through his preaching the Gospel to them, great gatherings of the people to Shiloh, and the Gentiles seeking to the root of Jesse, set up for an ensign to the people, might be provoked to an emulation of them; and likewise seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and thereby have his end he so much wished for and desired:

and might save some of them;

he says “some”, not all, for he knew the bulk of the people was rejected, only a seed was left among them, a remnant according to the election of grace that should be saved, and which did obtain righteousness and life, while the rest were blinded. The ministers of the Gospel may be said to save souls, not efficiently, for the author or efficient cause of salvation is God only; the Father has chose unto it, the Son has effected it, and the Spirit applies it; but instrumentally, as the word preached by them is the means of regeneration, faith, and conversion, with which salvation is connected: and as they show unto men the way of salvation, and encourage souls to believe in Christ, in whom alone it is. Now the apostle argues from his office, and the usefulness of it, to some among the Jews, to saving purposes, to prove that their rejection was not total.

Romans 11:15**For if the casting away of them**

This argument, as before, in (Romans 11:12), is from the lesser to the greater, showing that as the Gentiles received present advantage through the rejection of the Jews, they would receive far greater at their future recovery, and which proves that their rejection is not final; for by “the casting away of them”, is meant the

rejection of the Jews, and refers to God’s writing a “Lo-ammi”, (Hosea 1:9) , upon them, and his taking away the Gospel from them, and which were the occasion of

the reconciling of the world,

the Gentiles; not of God’s drawing the scheme of their reconciliation in his Son; nor of the actual reconciliation of them by his sufferings and death; but of the Gospel, the word of reconciliation being carried among them upon the Jews’ disbelief and contempt of it, which was made effectual by the power of divine grace, to the reconciling of them to God, to the, way of salvation by Christ; to be willing to serve him, and be saved by him; to, lay down their arms, surrender to his victorious grace, and become obedient to him both by word and deed; and if this was the case then, as it was, he asks

what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

By the receiving of them is meant the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they will be received by Christ, on whom they will look with an eye of faith, and mourn in an evangelical manner for their sins against him; who casts out none that come unto him, but receives them into his arms in the most kind and tender manner; and when they will be also openly received into the house and family of God, into the visible church of Christ; and as the apostle afterwards says, “be grafted into their own olive tree”, (Romans 11:24) ; and this their restoration will be as “life from the dead”; which regards not so much the quickening of the Jews themselves, though their conversion will be, as the conversion of every sinner is, a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, and is so represented in (Ezekiel 37:1-14) , but rather the reviving the work of God among the Gentile churches, who having lain long in a dead, lifeless, lukewarm, and indifferent frame of spirit, will be aroused and quickened, at this wonderful work of grace upon the Jews; and besides it will be as unexpected by them, and as surprising to them, as a person’s being raised from the dead would be; yea as joyful, and as welcome to them, as if a man received his nearest relation and friend from the dead; add to this, and which some of the ancients make to be the sense of the place, quickly after the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles being brought in, and nothing more to be done in a way of grace, the first resurrection from the dead will follow, and happy is he that will have part in it.

Romans 11:16**For if the firstfruit be holy**

Some by “the firstfruit” and “root” understand Christ, who is sometimes called, “the firstfruits of them that slept”, (1 Corinthians 15:20) , and “the root of Jesse and David”, (Isaiah 11:10) (Romans 15:12) (Revelation 5:5) , and indeed of all the righteous; and certain it is, that since he is holy, has all the holiness of his people in him, and is sanctification unto them, they shall be holy likewise; have it imparted to them in this life, and perfected in them in another: but this does not seem to agree with the apostle’s argument. Others think that by them are meant the Jewish ancestors, and particularly Abraham, and dream of a holiness derived from him to his natural seed; but if no such holiness was derived from him to his immediate offspring, Ishmael, it can hardly be thought any should be communicated by him to his remote posterity; and to these here designed, at the distance of four or five thousand years from him: but by them are intended the first converts among the Jews, under the Gospel dispensation; it being usual with the apostle to call those persons, that were first converted in any place, the firstfruits of it; see (Romans 16:5) (1 Corinthians 16:15) ; These were they who received the firstfruits of the Spirit in Judea, and who first among the Jews hoped and believed in Christ; these were but few in number, as the “firstfruit” is but small in comparison of “the lump”, and mean, abject, and despicable, as the “root” under, and in a dry ground is; but yet were pledges and presages of a larger number of souls among that people, to be converted in the latter day: now the apostle’s argument is, “if the firstfruit be holy”,

the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches;

that is, that whereas those persons who were converted among the Jews, however few in number, and despicable in appearance they might be, yet were truly sanctified by the Spirit of God; and as they were, so should the whole body of that people be in the last days, “when holiness [shall] be upon the horses’ bells, [and] every pot in Judah and Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts”, (Zechariah 14:20 Zechariah 14:21) , by which metaphorical expressions is meant, that holiness should be common to the whole nation, and all the inhabitants of it, of which the call of some few among them was a pledge and presage. The allusion in the former clause is to the holy offerings of firstfruits to the Lord, the two wave loaves, (Leviticus 23:14 Leviticus

23:17) , whereby the whole lump was sanctified, for after use throughout the year following; and that in the latter clause, to the holiness of trees; that is, to trees devoted to sacred use or that were planted in a field appropriated thereunto: hence we read F20, that the men of Jericho permitted, or as other exemplars read it, cut down (הקדש של גמזיזות של) , “branches of holiness”, or “holy branches”; and eat fallen fruit on the sabbath day. F21 Bartenora explains these branches, of such that grow upon a tree devoted to holy uses; and Maimonides F23, observes, that they thought it lawful to eat what grew in a holy field.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Misn. Pesachim, c. 4. sect. 8.

F21 In Misn. Pesachim. c. 4. sect. 8.

F23 In ib.

Romans 11:17**And if some of the branches be broken**

This is to be understood, not of the exclusion of the Jews from their national church; for the persons designed by the “branches”, were the principal members of it, as the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the far greater part of the people; and on the other hand, the apostles and followers of Christ were put out of their synagogues, and deemed by them heretics and apostates: nor of the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple; for as yet they existed as a nation, their city of Jerusalem was in being, and their temple standing: but of their being left out of the Gospel church, gathered among them, they not believing in the Messiah, but rejected and crucified him; and though afterwards the Gospel was preached to them, they despise it, contradicted, and blasphemed it; so that it pleased God to take it wholly away from them, when they might be truly said to be, “as branches broken off”; which phrase seems to be borrowed from (Jeremiah 11:16) ; they were withered, lifeless, and hopeless, being cast off by God, and neglected by his ministers, the Gospel being removed from them, and they without the means of grace and salvation: and this was the case of the generality of the people; for though the apostle only says “some”, making the best of it in their favour against the Gentiles, and speaking in the softest terms; yet they were only a few, a seed, a remnant, that were taken into the Gospel church, and the rest were blinded, hardened, rejected, and left out for their unbelief:

and thou being a wild olive tree:

speaking to the Gentiles, to some, not to all of them; for not a whole tree, but a part of one, what is cut out of it, a scion from it is grafted into another; and so they were a certain number which God took out from among the Gentiles, to be a people for his name and glory, and who before conversion were comparable to a wild olive tree; for though they might have some show of morality, religion, and worship, yet lived in gross ignorance, superstition, idolatry, and profaneness were destitute of a divine revelation, of all spiritual light and knowledge, of true righteousness and the grace of God; were barren and unfruitful in good works, were without hope, God and Christ in the world. This metaphor rather regards their character, case, and manners, than their original; in respect of which they and the Jews were on a level, being by nature equally corrupt, and children of wrath; and yet though a wild olive tree, were

grafted amongst them;

meaning either the broken branches, in whose stead they were grafted; the Syriac version favours this sense, reading it (Nwhytkwdb) , “in their place”; as also in (Romans 11:19) ; and so the Ethiopic version: or rather the believing Jews, of whom the first Gospel church and churches consisted; for the Jews first trusted in Christ, received the firstfruits of the Spirit, and were first incorporated into a Gospel church state; and then the Gentiles which believed were received among them. The first coalition of Jews and Gentiles, or the ingrafting of the Gentiles in among the Jews that believed, was at Antioch, when dropping their distinctive names of Jews and Gentiles, they took the common name of Christians, (Acts 11:19-21 Acts 11:26) . So that this is not to be understood of an ingrafting into Christ unless by a visible profession, but of being received into a Gospel church state; which is signified by the “olive tree” in the next clause:

and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

the Gospel church is so called for its excellency the olive tree being a choice tree, as they were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; for its fruitfulness, bringing forth berries that are wholesome, delightful, and useful, so the saints are filled with the fruits of grace, and good works, which are by Christ to the praise and glory of God; for its beauty when laden with fruit, so a Gospel church is beautiful maintaining the purity of Gospel doctrine, discipline,

worship and conversation; “his beauty shall be as the olive tree”, (Hosea 14:6) ; see (Jeremiah 11:16) ; and for its verdure and durability, and growing on the mountains, all which may denote the continuance and firmness of the church of Christ. Now the Gentiles being grafted into a Gospel church state with the believing Jews, partook of the same root and fatness as they did, being built upon the same “foundation of the apostles prophets”, (Ephesians 2:20) ; rooted, grounded, and built up in the same church state they enjoyed the same privileges, had the doctrines of Christ and his apostles preached to them, communicated with them in the ordinances of the Gospel, and were satisfied with the goodness and fatness of the house of God; for they became “fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel”, (Ephesians 3:6) , the apostle speaks according to the nature of the olive tree, which is unctuous, from whence an oil is taken, which makes the face of man to shine, the fruit of which fattens those that are lean; and hence it loses not its leaves, (dia to yermon kai liparon) , “because of its heat and fatness”, as Plutarch F24 says.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Sympos. l. 8. qu. 10.

Romans 11:18**Boast not against the branches**

Those that were broken off: the apostle would not have them vaunt it over them, despise them, and trample upon them; but pity them, and pray for and be abundantly thankful and humbled before God, under a sense of God's sovereign and distinguishing grace, who had settled them in a Gospel church state, who were before comparable to a wild olive tree; and much less should they glory over the believing Jews, among whom they were, there being no difference between them, for they were all one in Christ Jesus:

but if thou boast;

but if such a vain temper of mind should prevail, he suggests they would do well to sit down and consider what little reason they had on their side to glory; and if such glorying and boasting, one against another was lawful, the Jews had the greatest reason for it; for, adds the apostle,

thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

The Jews received no advantages from the Gentiles, but on the contrary the Gentiles from the Jews, to whom

were committed the oracles of God, and by whom they were faithfully kept and transmitted to the Gentiles; the Gospel itself came out first from among them; the first preachers of it were Jews, who carried it into the Gentile world, where it was greatly succeeded to the conversion of many, who by this means were brought into a Gospel church state, and so enjoyed all the privileges they did: yea, Christ himself, according to the flesh, came of them, was sent unto them, was the minister of them, lived and died among them, and wrought out the great salvation for his people; hence “salvation” itself is said to be “of the Jews”, (John 4:22) , so that the root and foundation of all their enjoyments were from the Jews, and not those of the Jews from them; hence there was no room, nor reason, for boasting against them, and vaunting it over them.

Romans 11:19**Thou wilt say then**

This is an objection which the apostle foresaw the Gentiles would make against what he had said, and in favour of their boasting;

the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

The sense of which is, that the Jews were rejected and left out of the Gospel church, on purpose to make way for the Gentiles, that they might be put in their room; and consequently the Jews must be more vile and unworthy, and the Gentiles more deserving of such favours and privileges, or God would never have taken such a step, to leave out one to make room for the other.

Romans 11:20**Well**

To this the apostle answers, by approving and granting in, part what was said, that the unbelieving Jews were broken off and rejected, and that the Gentiles that believed in Christ were grafted in among the Jews that professed his name; but then he tacitly denies that it was for their sakes, and their account, they were broken off, but for their own incredulity:

because of unbelief they were broken off;

because of their unbelief and contempt of the Messiah, they were rejected of God, and died in their sins; that which excluded their forefathers from the land of Canaan, shut them out of the Gospel church state, and the kingdom of heaven:

and thou standest by faith;

which is not of a man's self, but the gift of God; so that it was not by their merits, and better deservings, but by the grace of God that they were in the situation they were; they were blessed with faith in Christ, and having made a profession of it were admitted to Gospel ordinances, and into a Gospel church; and being helped hitherto to hold the profession of their faith in a becoming manner they stood their ground, and continued in their church relation; and therefore ought not to give way to a vain boasting spirit, but to be humble, modest, and dependent; wherefore he gives them this proper pertinent, and wholesome advice,

be not highminded, but fear.

The apostle would have them not be elated with their gifts, privileges, and enjoyments, and look over others, or down upon them with contempt and disdain, considering that all they had and enjoyed were owing to the goodness of God, and not to any deserts of theirs; and therefore should fear the Lord and his goodness; for not a fear of hell and damnation, or a distrust of the grace of God, is here meant; but a fear of offending him, and that not from a dread of punishment, but from a sense of his grace and goodness; and also designs humility of soul, in opposition to pride, haughtiness, and elation of mind, a lowly carriage and behaviour to others, and an humble dependence on grace and strength from above, to enable to persevere and hold out to the end; for “let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” into sin, (1 Corinthians 10:12) ; so as to dishonour God and Christ grieve the Holy Spirit, wound his own conscience, and bring himself under the censure of the church, and to be cut off from the good olive tree, the root and fatness of which he now partakes.

Romans 11:21**For if God spared not the natural branches**

That is, executed his righteous judgments, inflicted due punishment upon the Jews, unchurched them, and stripped them of those privileges they enjoyed in a church state; who were the natural descendants of Abraham; were naturally, and as born into the world, in a national church state and in that national covenant God made with that people; to whom belonged a national adoption, in which sense they were the sons of God, his firstborn; they were chosen by him as a special and peculiar people, to very great favours and privileges; they were Christ's own, he came of them

according to the flesh, and was particularly sent unto them, and ministered among them; wherefore, if, at last, God did not spare this people, though he had for a long time done it, but stirred up all his wrath against them, they disbelieving his Son, rejecting and despising the Messiah, and salvation by him, this should awaken the fear, care, and caution of the Gentiles in a church state, lest if they behave not well, he should deal in like manner with them:

take heed lest he also spare not thee;

for whatever was done to the Jews in former or latter times, are written for the instruction and admonition of Gentiles; and the use they are to make thereof is, to be careful and cautious, lest by imbibing principles derogatory from the grace of God and glory of Christ, or by an unbecoming walk and conversation they provoke the Lord to unchurch them as he has done the Jews before them; and which they may the rather fear, since the Jews were the natural branches, and they formerly strangers and aliens.

Romans 11:22

Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God

The consideration of both the grace and kindness of God to some, and his severity or strict justice towards others, is recommended by the apostle as very proper to abate pride, vain glory, and haughtiness of spirit; and to engage to humility, fear, care, and caution;

on them which fell, severity:

the Jews who stumbled at Christ and his Gospel, and fell by unbelief, God in strict justice and righteous judgment not only destroyed, as afterwards their nation, city, and temple, and scattered them abroad in the world to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse in all places; but cast them off as his people, broke his covenant with them, took away his Gospel from them, left them out of a Gospel church state, except a few, and gave up the generality of them to blindness and hardness of heart; so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost, both with respect to things civil and religious, and they continue as living standing monuments of God's severity and justice, to be beheld by us Gentiles with pity and concern, and to excite in us the fear of God, and caution as to our conduct and behaviour in the world, and in the church:

but towards thee, goodness;

the Gentiles, who not only share in the goodness and grace of God, displayed in the election of many of them to eternal life, in their redemption by Christ, and the effectual calling of them by the grace of God; but in their church state, they being made fellow citizens with the saints, fellow heirs, and of the same body, and having a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters; and therefore under great obligation to fear the Lord, and his goodness, and to walk worthy of the calling wherein they are called, in all humility and lowliness of mind:

if thou continue in his goodness;

meaning not the love, grace, and free favour of God, or the grace of the Spirit, a continuance in which no "if" is to be put upon; for such who are interested in the love of God always continue in it, and nothing can separate them from it; and such as have the graces of the Spirit implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love, can never lose them; these always remain in them, and they in the possession of them, though not always in the exercise of them; but the goodness of God in a church state is here meant, as the means of grace and comfort, the ministration of the word and ordinances; and the sense is, if thou dost not despise the riches of divine goodness in a church relation, if thou dost not abuse it, or walk unworthy of it, if thou abidest by it, and retainest a value for it, thou wilt still share the advantages of it:

otherwise thou also shall be cut off;

from the good olive tree, the Gospel church state, into which the Gentiles were taken; and which, with respect to particular persons, may intend the act of excommunication by the church, expressed in Scripture by purging the old leaven, putting away the wicked person, withdrawing from such that are disorderly, and rejecting heretics, that is, from the communion of the church; and with respect to whole bodies and societies, an entire unchurching of them by removing the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; which threatening has been awfully fulfilled in many Gentile churches, in Asia, Africa, and Europe; and therefore may serve to awaken our fear, care, and caution, lest we should be treated in like manner.

Romans 11:23

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief

The apostle suggests that the Jews also might be recovered and brought into a Gospel church state,

provided they did not continue in infidelity; but inasmuch as they seem to lie under invincible ignorance, obstinacy, and unbelief, and were such bitter enemies to the Gospel, and abhorers of Gospel ordinances, and a Gospel church state; yea, that they must and will abide in unbelief, unless the Spirit of God convinces them of it, and it is given to them to believe in Christ, and they are powerfully drawn by the Father to come to the Son, there is no possibility or likelihood that they

shall be grafted in,

or taken into a Gospel church state; to which the apostle answers, and argues for their ingrafting, and the possibility of it from the power of God:

for God is able to graft them in again;

as many of them were in the times of the apostles, and some since, for nothing is impossible with God; he can remove their unbelief, knock off the shackles and fetters in which they are held, and bring, them out of the prison of infidelity, in which they are shut up; he is able to take away the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, the veil that is over them, and turn them to the Lord; he can by his mighty power work faith in them, and cause them to look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn in an evangelical manner; he can bring them to Christ, and into his churches, and among his people, and fold them with the rest of his sheep; so that there one fold of Jew and Gentile, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:24

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree

As the apostle argues the possibility of bringing the Jews into a Gospel church state, from the power of God; so here the probability of it, or the easiness and likelihood of its being performed, from the ingrafting of the Gentiles; who were originally like an olive tree,

which is wild by nature,

grows in the field, bears no fruit, and is useless and unprofitable; so they by nature were sinners of the Gentiles, children of wrath, full of unrighteousness, without any fruit of holiness; being not within the pale of the Jewish church and commonwealth; but in the wide field of the world, worthless, and of no account; and yet many were "cut out of" this wild olive tree; were, through the ministration of the Gospel, by the power of divine grace separated from the rest of the world; were effectually called and brought into a Gospel church

state; God took out from among them a people for his name. This their being cut out of the wild olive, as it expresses the power and grace of God towards them, it might teach them humility, as it led them to observe their original state and condition:

and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree:

for an olive tree being full of fatness, will not admit of ingrafting; nor was it ever usual to ingraft upon olive; hence the Jews say F25 (xbkrh Nhb Nya Mytz) , "there is no ingrafting on olives": besides, it is contrary to nature, use, and custom, to ingraft wild scions, or grafts of any sort into a good stock; but always good scions or grafts into a wild stock, for in wild hungry stocks, grafts grow best: but in the ingrafting of the Gentiles into a Gospel church state, just such a method was taken, as if a wild graft were let into a good stock; so that this ingrafting was not of nature, it was contrary to it; but of pure grace, and, sovereign good will and pleasure; and the apostle's argument is this, that if the Gentiles, who were originally as a wild olive tree; if some as grafts were taken out from among them, and, quite contrary to their own nature, and the nature of things, were, by the goodness and grace of God, grafted into a good olive, the Gospel church state;

how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

that there is a greater likelihood, and more easily may it be, according to all appearance of things, that the Jews, the natural branches or descendants of Abraham, should be brought into a Gospel church state, which first began among them, and which at first only consisted of some of their nation. The Gospel church is called "their own olive tree", in allusion to Israel, or the Jewish church, which is often so called in their writings.

``Says F26 R. Joshua ben Levi, to what are the Israelites like? (tyzl) , "to an olive tree"; to teach them that as the leaves of an olive tree do not fall, neither on sunshine days, nor on rainy days; so the Israelites will never cease, neither in this world, nor in the world to come; and says R. Jochanan, to what are the Israelites like? "to an olive"; to teach thee that as an olive does not send forth its oil, but by the means of pressing, so the Israelites do not return to do good, but by the means of chastisement."

and says another F1 of their writers,

as oil ascendeth above all liquids, and is not mixed with them; so the Israelites ascend above all nations, and are not mixed with them; and there is an intimation that they are even like (tyzl) , “to an olive”, that is pressed or squeezed; for so the Israelites are bruised and afflicted, and yet, notwithstanding all this, they ascend by virtue of the law, which is called “oil olive”

It is easy to see from whence this simile is borrowed.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 T. Hieros. Celaim, c. 1. fol. 27. 2.

F26 T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 53. 2.

F1 R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 4.

Romans 11:25

For I would not, brethren

The apostle in order to raise the attention of the Gentiles to what he was about to deliver to them, not only styles them “brethren”, expressing his affection for them, and their relation to him and other believing Jews, and to one another, being all one in Christ Jesus, partakers of the same grace, and heirs of the same glory; but also tells them, that what he had to acquaint them with was a “mystery”, a thing secret and hidden, which had not been heard of and known, at least not so fully and clearly as he was about to reveal it; and because of his great respect for them, he was unwilling, as he says,

that ye should be ignorant of this mystery;

he was desirous that they should abound and improve in all spiritual knowledge and judgment, and, among the rest, be better informed of this particular article, the call of the Jews: and his view in apprizing them of it is expressed in the following clause,

lest ye should be wise in your own conceits:

lest they should imagine that they were the only wise and knowing persons, and be elated in their minds with their knowledge and understanding, and look with contempt upon the poor, blind, ignorant Jews, as if they were always to remain in such a state of darkness and infidelity. The thing he had to inform them of is,

that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;

by Israel is meant the Jews, the descendants of Jacob, whose name was Israel. Philo the Jew observes F2, that this name signifies (orasin yeou) , “the vision of God”; indeed, Jacob had it given him when he wrestled with

the angel, and saw God face to face, though it does not seem to be for that reason; however, blindness had now befallen the Jews, who had been favoured with a divine revelation, with the knowledge of God, his will and worship; and none were more blind than those who were called the servants and messengers of the Lord of hosts, as the Scribes and Pharisees, the priests and princes of the Jewish world. This “blindness” designs their unbelief, the hardness of their hearts, and darkness of their understandings with respect to God himself, whom they knew not in Christ; not as the Father of Christ; nor even the perfections of his nature, particularly his righteousness; which was the reason of their setting up their own righteousness, and of their non-submission to the righteousness of Christ: they were blind as to the Messiah; they knew him not, when he came; they saw no beauty and comeliness in him; could not discern the characters of him in Jesus, though they were so manifest; and rejected him notwithstanding the clear evidence of his ministry and miracles. They were in the dark about the sense of the prophecies of the Old Testament; a vail was upon their hearts when they read them, so that they understood them not, and could not see their accomplishment in Christ; they were even ignorant of the law, the spiritual nature, true use, and right end and scope of it; and it is no wonder that the Gospel should be hidden from them. This blindness “happened” to them not by chance, but befell them by the decree, and according to the will of God, who hardens whom he pleases; and according to various predictions in the Old Testament, cited in (Matthew 13:14 Matthew 13:15) (John 12:39 John 12:40) (Romans 11:8-10) ; and in righteous judgment, for since they liked not to retain God and his Christ in their knowledge, it was but just in God to give them up to reprobate minds, to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart: but then this blindness only happened to them “in part”; not that it was only in some measure or some degree, for it was total, they were darkness itself, and had no spiritual and evangelic light at all on whom it fell; but that this blindness was not general with respect to persons, there were some few, a seed, a remnant, that were delivered from it, though the far greater part of the nation were involved in it, and continue in it to this day; and will do, “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”: that is, till the whole number of God’s elect among them, be called and brought into the Gospel church state, which in the latter day will be very great; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the

Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and the abundance of the sea shall be converted, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come to the church, and multitudes of them shall flock thither, as doves to their windows: and since the blindness of the Jews is not yet removed, it seems plain that the full number of God’s chosen ones among the Gentiles is not yet completed in regeneration; for as soon as ever they are all called and brought in, the vail will be taken away from the Jews, and they will be turned unto the Lord.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 De Temulentia, p. 251. & De Sacrificiis Abel & Cain, p. 151.

Romans 11:26

And so all Israel shall be saved

Meaning not the mystical spiritual Israel of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, who shall appear to be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, when all God’s elect among the latter are gathered in, which is the sense many give into; but the people of the Jews, the generality of them, the body of that nation, called “the fulness” of them, (Romans 11:12) , and relates to the latter day, when a nation of them shall be born again at once; when, their number being as the sand of the sea, they shall come up out of the lands where they are dispersed, and appoint them one head, Christ, and great shall be the day of Jezreel; when they as a body, even the far greater part of them that shall be in being, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; shall acknowledge Jesus to be the true Messiah, and shall look to him, believe on him, and be saved by him from wrath to come. There is a common saying among them F3, (abh Mlwel qlx Mhl vy larvy lk) , “all Israel shall have a part”, or “portion in the world to come”; and in support of this they usually produce the passage in (Isaiah 60:21) : “thy people also shall be all righteous”: yea, they even go so far as to say F4,

“that hell fire will have no power over the transgressors of Israel;”

fancying, that every individual person of their nation will be saved; though they sometimes except such who deny the resurrection of the dead, and that the law is from heaven, or is an epicure, and he that reads foreign books, or is an enchanter, or pronounces the ineffable name: but the apostle is not to be understood

with such a latitude; he refers to the last times, and to a very general conversion of them to the Messiah:

as it is written,
(Isaiah 59:20) :

there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer:

the words of the prophet are, “and the Redeemer shall come to Zion”: by the Redeemer, or Deliverer, words of the same signification, is meant the Messiah, as the Jews F5 themselves own, and apply this passage to him; who is the “Goel”, or near kinsman of his people, to whom the right of their redemption belongs as man; and who as God was able to effect it, and, as God-man and Mediator, was every way qualified for it, and has obtained it for them: and whereas, in the prophet Isaiah, he is said to “come to”, and by the apostle, “out of Zion”, this may be reconciled by observing, that the servile letter (l) sometimes signifies “from”, as well as to, when it is put in the room of (m) ; of which instances may be given, as (Exodus 16:1) (19:1) (Numbers 33:38) (Ezra 3:8) (1 Kings 12:24) compared with (2 Chronicles 11:4) . Besides, the Messiah was to come out of Zion, as well as to come to it, according to (Psalms 14:7) ; so that the apostle fitly expresses the faith and expectation of the old Jewish church in this citation:

and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

in the prophet it is, “and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob”, (Isaiah 59:20) . The apostle follows the translation of the Septuagint, and which is favoured by the Chaldee paraphrase, which runs thus; “the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to turn the rebellious ones of the house of Jacob to the law”; so that the Jew F6 has no reason to charge the apostle with a perversion of the prophet’s words, when they are cited so agreeably to their own Targumist: and the sense of them relates not to what Christ did on the cross, when the iniquities of his people were laid on him, and he bore them, and removed them all in one day from them; but to what he will do to the Jews in the latter day, in consequence thereof; he will convince them of their ungodliness, give them repentance for it and remission of it.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Misn. Sanhedrin c. 11. sect. 1.

F4 T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 27. 1.

F5 Aben Ezra in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1.

F6 R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 81.

Romans 11:27**For this is my covenant unto them**

This is what God has promised to them in covenant, and he will be as good as his word; his covenant will never be broken, it will always remain sure and inviolable; so that there is not only a possibility, and a probability, but even a certainty, of the call and conversion of the Jews; which promise and covenant will have their accomplishment,

when I,
saith the Lord,

shall take away their sins:

some think that the apostle alludes to (Jeremiah 31:34) ; others, that he takes this passage out of (Isaiah 27:9) ; where in the Septuagint version the selfsame phrase is used; though it may be no citation, or reference, but the apostle's own words, explaining what is meant by "turning away ungodliness from Jacob", (Romans 11:26) ; and as before; regards not the taking away of their sins by the sacrifice of Christ, which is done already, and is what the blood of bulls and goats could not do; but of the removing of their sins from themselves, from their consciences, by the application of the blood of Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness.

Romans 11:28**As concerning the Gospel**

Whereas it might be objected to the call and conversion of the Jews, their implacable enmity to the Gospel, the apostle replies, by granting, that with respect to that,

they [were] enemies

to God and Christ, to the Gospel, and the ministers of it, and particularly to the apostle:

for your sakes;

the Gentiles, to whom it was preached, and by whom it was received, and which greatly irritated and provoked the Jews; or the sense is, that they were suffered to reject the Gospel, and treat it with hatred and virulence, that by this means it might be taken away from them, and carried to the Gentiles; so that the present enmity of the Jews to the Gospel, turned to the advantage of the Gentiles, and should not hinder the future conversion of God's elect among them in the latter day:

but as touching the election, they are beloved for**the fathers' sakes;**

as many of them as belong to the election of grace, are beloved of God; and will appear to be so, when they are called by grace, as they will be, for the confirming of the promises concerning their future restoration made unto their fathers; not one of which shall ever fall to the ground, or they be deprived of any gifts and blessings of grace, which God has purposed for them, or promised to them, as is clear from what follows:

Romans 11:29**For the gifts and calling of God**

By "gifts" are meant, not the gifts of nature and providence, as life, health, strength, riches, and honour, which God sometimes gives, and repents of, and takes away; as he repented that he had made man upon earth, and Saul king of Israel; which must be understood by an "anthropopathy", after the manner of men, and that not of a change of the counsel of his mind, but of the course of his providence: nor do gifts here design external gifts of grace, or such gifts of the Spirit, which qualify men for ministerial work, for public service in the church; for these may be taken away, as the "parable" of the "talents" shows, (Matthew 25:29) ; see (1 Corinthians 13:8) ; but the special and spiritual gifts of God's free grace, which relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls of men, even that, grace which was given to God's elect in Christ before the world was, and all those spiritual blessings wherewith they were then blessed in him: these

are without repentance;

that is, they are immutable and unalterable; God never revokes them, or calls them in again, or takes them away from the persons to whom he has made such a previous donation: the reasons are, because that his love from whence they spring is always the same; it admits of no distinction, nor of any degrees, nor of any alteration; and electing grace, according to which these gifts are bestowed, stands sure and immovable; not upon the foot of works, but of the sovereign will of God, and always has its sure and certain effect; and the covenant of grace, in which they are secured, remains firm and inviolable; and indeed, these gifts are no other than the promises of it, which are all yea and amen in Christ, and the blessings of it, which are the sure mercies of David. Whatever God purposes, or promises to give, or really does give to his people, whether into the hands of Christ for them, or into their own, he never repents

of or reverses. Agreeably to these words of the apostle, the Jews say F7

``that the holy blessed God, after (hntmh Ntnv) , "that he hath given a gift", (יקחנה המוקבל) , "never takes it away from the receiver"; and this is the "Gemara", or doctrine of the Rabbins F8 (דמייהב יהבי משקל לא שקלי) , "that giving they give, but taking away they do not take away"; the gloss upon it is, (ybhyd rtb) , "after it is given":

the meaning is, that what is once given to men from heaven, is never taken away from them up into heaven: and elsewhere F9 they ask,

``is there any servant to whom his master gives a gift, and returns and takes it away from him?"

Moreover, the apostle here says the same of the "calling of God", as of gifts; by which is meant, not a bare external call by the ministry of the word, which oftentimes is without effect, and may be where persons are neither chosen, nor converted, nor saved; but an internal effectual call, by special, powerful, and efficacious grace; and designs either actual calling, to which are inseparably annexed final perseverance in grace, and eternal glorification; or rather the purpose of God from eternity, to call his people in time, and which is never repented of, or changed. The apostle's argument here is this, that since there are a number of people among the Jews whom God has loved, and has chosen to everlasting salvation, and has in covenant promised to them, and secured and laid up gifts for them, and has determined to call them by his grace; and since all these are unchangeable and irreversible, the future call and conversion of these persons must be sure and certain.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 R. Saphorno apud R. Juda Muscato in Sepher. Cosri, fol. 43.

F8 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 25. 1.

F9 T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 1.

Romans 11:30**For as ye in times past have not believed God**

The times referred to, are the times of ignorance, idolatry, and superstition; when God suffered the Gentiles, for many hundreds of years, to walk in their own ways; while the Jews were his favourite people, were chosen by him above all people, separated from

them, and distinguished by his goodness; had his word and oracles, his judgments and his statutes to direct them, and many other valuable blessings: the times before the coming of the Messiah are here meant, when these people sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death; till Christ, who came to lighten the Gentiles, sent his Gospel among them, and which has been attended with great success; in these times they were in a state of incredulity: they either, as some of them, did not believe there was a God, or that there was but one God, at least but very few believed it; and these did not know who he was; nor did they glorify him as God, or perform any true spiritual worship to him: the far greater part believed there were more gods, and did service to them which by nature were no gods, and fell down to idols of gold, and silver, and wood, and stone:

and yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief;

that is, they were regenerated, effectually called and converted, through the rich and abundant mercy of God; repentance unto life was granted to them; and faith in our Lord Jesus, as a free grace gift, was bestowed upon them; and they had an application of pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ, made unto them; and all this through the unbelief of the Jews: not that their unbelief could be the cause of their obtaining mercy; but the Jews not believing in the Messiah, but rejecting him, and contradicting and blaspheming his Gospel, it was taken away from them, and carried to the Gentiles; which was the means of their believing in Christ, and obtaining mercy; so that the unbelief of the Jews was the occasion and means, in Providence, of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles, whereby faith came; see (Romans 11:11) . This mercy they are said to enjoy "now"; for the present time of the Gospel is the dispensation of mercy to the Gentiles.

Romans 11:31**Even so have these also now not believed**

Now is the time of the Jews' unbelief, blindness has happened to them, the vail is over their hearts; as the Gentiles formerly did not believe God, so the Jews do not now; though they believe there is a God, and that there is but one God, yet they do not believe God in Christ; nor that he is the Father of Christ; or that Christ is the Son of God, the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world: they do not believe, as some read the words, connecting them with the next clause, and so they stand in the

original text, “in your mercy”; meaning either Christ, in whom the Gentiles obtained mercy; or the Gospel, the means of it; or the sense is, that they do not believe that mercy belongs to the Gentiles, having entertained a notion, treat the Messiah, and the blessings of mercy and goodness by him, are peculiar to Israel: but our version after Beza, who follows Theophylact, connects the clause with the following,

that through your mercy they may obtain mercy; not through the mercy the Gentiles show to others, but which they have received of God; and principally intends faith, which springs from the mercy of God, and is a gift of his pure, free, rich grace; and stands opposed to the unbelief of the Jews, through which the Gentiles are said to obtain mercy; and the meaning: is, that in time to come, the Jews, observing the mercy obtained and enjoyed by the Gentiles, will be provoked to jealousy, and stirred up to an emulation of them, to seek for the same mercy at the same hands, and in the same way, they have had it; see (Romans 11:11) ; The apostle’s argument in favour of the call and conversion of the Jews, upon the whole is this, that since the unbelief of the Gentiles was no bar to their obtaining mercy, and that through the infidelity of the Jews; then it cannot be thought, that the present blindness, hardness of heart, enmity, and unbelief, which now attend the Jews, can be any obstacle to their obtaining mercy in the same way the Gentiles have; but as the one has been, the other also will be.

Romans 11:32

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief

Both Jews and Gentiles, particularly God’s elect among them: some think the metaphor is taken from the binding up of sheaves in bands; and that Jews and Gentiles are the sheaves, and unbelief the band, in which they are bound together; but the apostle is not speaking of their being together in unbelief, but as separate, first the Gentiles, and now the Jews: rather it seems to be taken from a prison, and Jews and Gentiles are represented as prisoners, and unbelief the prison, in which they are shut up by God: not that God is the author of unbelief, or of any other sin in men; he does not put it into them, or them into that, but finding them in unbelief, concludes them in it, or leaves them in such a state, and does not as yet however deliver out of it, or say to the prisoners, go forth: moreover, to be “concluded in unbelief”, is the same as to be “concluded

under sin”, (Galatians 3:22) ; that is, to be thoroughly convinced of it; and to be held and bound down by such a sense of it in the conscience, as to see no way to escape deserved punishment, or to obtain salvation, but by fleeing to the mercy of God in Christ:

that he might have mercy upon all:

not upon all the individuals of Jews and Gentiles; for all are not concluded in, or convinced of the sin of unbelief, but only such who are eventually believers, as appears from the parallel text, (Galatians 3:22) ; and designs all God’s elect among the Jews, called “their fulness”, (Romans 11:12) ; and all God’s elect among the Gentiles, called “the fulness of the Gentiles”, (Romans 11:25) ; for whom he has mercy in store, and will bestow it on them; and in order to bring them to a sense of their need of it, and that he may the more illustriously display the riches of it, he leaves them for a while in a state of unbelief, and then by his Spirit thoroughly convinces them of it, and gives them faith to look to, and believe in, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

Romans 11:33

O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God

These words are the epilogue, or conclusion of the doctrinal part of this epistle, and relate to what is said throughout the whole of it hitherto; particularly to the doctrines of salvation by Christ, justification by his righteousness, predestination, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and their restoration in the latter day; upon the whole of which, the apostle breaks forth into this pathetic exclamation; the design of which is to show, how much of the wisdom and knowledge of God is displayed in these doctrines, and how small a part of it is known by the best of men, and therefore ought not to be cavilled at and objected to, because of some difficulties attending them, but to be received upon the testimony of divine revelation: and if there was a depth in these things unsearchable and past finding out by so great a man as the apostle, who had by revelation such knowledge in the mysteries of grace, and who had been caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unutterable, how much less is it to be fathomed by others, and therefore should be silent: by “the wisdom and knowledge of God”, one and the same thing is meant; and design not so much the perfections of the divine nature, which are infinite and unsearchable, the understanding of which is too high

for creatures, and not be attained to by them; nor the display of them in the works of creation and providence, in which there are most glorious and amazing instances; but rather the effects of them, the counsels and decrees of God; which are so wisely formed and laid, as not to fail of their accomplishment, or to be frustrated of their end; and the doctrines of grace relating to them, in which are treasures, riches, that is, an abundance of wisdom and knowledge; and a depth, not to be reached to the bottom of, in this imperfect state, and in which the knowledge and wisdom of God are wonderfully displayed: thus in the doctrine of redemption and salvation by Christ, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; in the person fixed upon to be the Saviour, his own Son; who by the assumption of human nature, being God and man in one person, was very fit and proper to be a Mediator between God and man, to transact the affair of salvation; was every way qualified for it, and able to do it: so likewise in the manner in which it is accomplished, being done in a way which glorifies all the divine perfections; in which the rights of God’s justice and the honour of his holiness are secured, as well as his love, grace, and mercy, displayed; in which Satan is most mortified, sin condemned, and the sinner saved; and also in the persons, the subjects of it, ungodly sinners, enemies, the chief of sinners, whereby the grace of God is the more illustrated, and all boasting in the creature excluded. The wisdom of God manifestly appears, in the doctrine of a sinner’s justification; which though it proceeds from grace, yet upon the foot of redemption and satisfaction, in a way of strict justice; so that God is just, whilst he is the justifier; it is of persons ungodly, and without a righteousness in themselves, and yet by a perfect and complete righteousness, answerable to all the demands of law and justice; and the grace of faith is wisely made the recipient of this blessing, that it might appear to be of free grace, and not of works, and that the justified ones might have solid peace, joy, and comfort, from it. The doctrine of predestination is full of the wisdom and knowledge of God; his choice of some to everlasting life in his Son, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, for the glorifying of his grace and mercy, in a way of righteousness; and his passing by others, leaving them to themselves, and in their sins, justly to perish for them, for the glorifying of his justice, are acts of the highest wisdom, and done according to the counsel of his will. The account just given of the call of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, is an astonishing scheme of infinite wisdom; that,

on the one hand salvation should come to the Gentiles, through the fall of the Jews, and they should obtain mercy through their unbelief; and on the other hand that the restoration of the Jews should be as life from the dead to the Gentiles; and the Jews, through their mercy, obtain mercy; and that both, in their turns, should be shut up in unbelief by God, that he might have mercy on them all, “O the depth” To which is added,

how unsearchable are his judgments!

which are not to be understood of his awful judgments on wicked men in particular, nor of the administrations of his providence in general; though these are a great deep, and in many instances are unsearchable, and cannot be counted for in the present state, but will hereafter be made manifest; nor of the commands of God, sometimes called his judgments, which are all plain, and may be easily searched out in his word; but rather of the counsels and purposes of God, and the doctrines of grace relating thereunto; which are the deep things of God, and are only searched out by the Spirit of God, who reveals them to us:

and his ways past finding out!

not the methods and course of his providence, though his way in this respect is often in the deep, his footsteps are not to be known, discerned, and traced, by finite creatures; but rather the goings forth and steps of his wisdom from everlasting, in his purposes and decrees, council and covenant, which are higher than the ways of men, even as the heavens are higher than the earth; and which are all mercy and truth to his chosen people, and strict justice to others, and not to be found out by any; particularly his ways and methods, and dealings, with both Jews and Gentiles; that he should for so many hundred years leave the Gentiles in blindness and unbelief; and now for as many years his favourite people the Jews in the same, and yet gather in his elect out of them both; these are things out of our reach and comprehension.

Romans 11:34

For who hath known the mind of the Lord

The intentions of his mind, the thoughts of his heart, and the counsels of his will: these could never have been known, if he had not revealed them; nor can the doctrines relating to them, though externally revealed, be known by the natural man, or by the mere dint of nature, but only by the light of the Spirit of

God; who searches them, and makes them known in a spiritual manner to spiritual men, who have a spiritual discerning of them; and yet even by these they are not known perfectly, only in part, and are seen through a glass darkly:

or who hath been his counsellor?

or was of his council, when all things were fixed according to his sovereign will: when the scheme of man's salvation was consulted and agreed upon between the eternal Three, there was no creature, angel, or man there; no created angel, only the eternal One, "the Counsellor", (Isaiah 9:6) ; or as the Septuagint there style him, (aggelov megalhv boulhv) , "the angel of the great council"; none but Father, Son, and Spirit, were present, when the book of life was made, when the names of God's elect were put into it, and others left out; when all things relating to his chosen ones, both for time and eternity, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were determined, ordered, and settled; and as there was no creature that assisted, or could give any advice about these matters, so there were none that were privy to the resolutions, determinations, and counsels of his will; which were purposed in himself and in his Son, and were known only to them and his Spirit, which is in him: from the whole it appears, that predestination is not according to men's works, or the foresight of them; for then these things would be plain and easy, they would not be unsearchable and past finding out; there would not be an unfathomable depth in them; the mind and counsels of God, and the springs of them, would be obvious; but it is according to his secret, sovereign, and unchangeable will.

Romans 11:35

Or who hath first given to him

See (Job 41:11) (35:7) ; no man can give God anything, which he has not first given him, or which he has not a prior right to, or a claim upon him for; Adam, in innocence, was not able to give God anything, nor are the angels in heaven, much less sinful men on earth; their bodies and souls, and all their enjoyments, all that is good in them, or done by them, are from the Lord; men by all their good works, best duties and services, give nothing to God, nor lay him under any manner of obligation to them: hence no man can merit anything at the hands of God, if he could,

it shall be recompensed to him again;

but it is impossible there should be merit in a creature, who has nothing but what he has from God, and does nothing but what he is obliged to do; and that not by his own strength, but by the grace and strength of God; and therefore there is no retribution made by God as of debt, but of grace: hence it follows, that God is indebted to, and obliged by none, and may do what he will with his own; love Jacob and hate Esau; choose one and not another; reject the Jews, and call the Gentiles; save and justify some, and not others; none can call him to account, or say unto him, what dost thou?

Romans 11:36

For of him, and through him, and to him are all things,

&c.] Not only all things in nature and providence, he being the Maker and efficient cause of things, and the preserver and supporter of them their beings, and to whose glory they are all designed and directed; but all things in grace owe their original to him, as their first cause; they are produced by him, and make for his glory; they all spring from his sovereign will, are brought about by his almighty power, and tend to the glory of his grace; as does every thing in election, redemption, and regeneration: particularly the counsels and purposes of God respecting men may be here meant; which all rise out of his own heart, without any motive or inducement to them in the creature; are accomplished by his divine power, notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils; and all issue in his glory, even such of them as may seem to carry in them severity to some of his creatures: and since this is the case, the following doxology, or ascription of glory to God, is justly and pertinently made,

to whom be glory for ever;

and which will be given to him by angels and men to all eternity, for the perfection of his being, the counsels of his will, and the works of his hands, both of nature and grace; to which the, apostle annexes his

amen,

so be it, assenting to it, wishing for it, and believing of it.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 12

The doctrines concerning predestination, justification being established, the duties of religion are built upon them, and enforced by them in this and the following chapters. The apostle first exhorts all

the members of the church in common to a regard to the worship of God, in opposition to the things of the world; and then the officers of the church particularly, to the discharge of their duty; and next all of them, both officers and members, to the performance of various duties respecting God, themselves, one another, and the men of the world. The duty of attending public worship is first mentioned, signified by a presentation of their bodies to the Lord, Ro 12:1 , to which they are moved, partly by the plenteous mercy and goodness of God to them; and partly by the acceptableness of it to God; as also by the reasonableness of the thing: then follows a dehortation from conformity to the world, the men and manners of it, in superstition and will worship, or in acts of immorality, Ro 12:2 , and also an exhortation to a different course of life, in seeking to please God; which is proposed upon a principle of grace in them, being renewed in the Spirit of their mind; and with this end and view, that they might the better prove, try, and discern, and come at, a greater knowledge of the mind and will of God: and whereas gifts are apt to swell men with pride and vanity, such as qualify men to bear any office in the church, the apostle cautions against this spirit and conduct, and exhorts to sobriety and humility; by observing, that what gifts they have, are such that God has given them, and which they have not of themselves; and what they have is only in part and in measure, some one and some another; and none have all gifts, Ro 12:3 , this he illustrates, Ro 12:4 , by an human body and the members of it, which being many, have not the same office, but some one and some another; which he accommodates to the body of Christ the church, Ro 12:5 , which though but one in Christ, has many members; and these are members one of another, and are designed mutually to serve and help each other, for which the gifts among them were bestowed: and then the apostle proceeds to take notice of the particular officers in the church, and exhorts them to the function of their offices, according to their different gifts; as, first, the preacher to preach according to the rule of faith, and the measure of gifts bestowed, Ro 12:6 , and then the deacon, the other officer, to attend to his deaconship, Ro 12:7 , and inasmuch as these officers, according to their different gifts, may be distinguished, some having a talent for stating, explaining, and defending doctrines, and may be called doctors, or teachers, let them attend to the doctrinal part of the word; and others having a talent in the practical way of preaching, whether by way of exhortation or comfort, and may be called exhorters

or comforters, let them attend to that branch of the ministry, Ro 12:8 , and as for the deacon, the performance of his office, whether it be by distributing to the poor, let him do it impartially and faithfully; or by assisting in the government of the church, let it be done with all diligence; or by showing mercy to the poor in distress, besides what they usually receive, let it be done with a cheerful countenance: next follow various duties which are mentioned, not in an exact order or method, but may be reduced to these heads; such as concern God, an unfeigned love of him, abhorrence of all evil, and a close attachment to whatsoever is good, Ro 12:9 , and also the worship of him, which is to be performed with diligence and fervency, Ro 12:11 , the exercise of the grace of hope with joy, patience in the midst of tribulations, and perseverance in prayer, Ro 12:12 , then such duties as concern one another, as Christians and brethren in a church relation; as to exercise an affectionate brotherly love to each other, and to honour one another; and even to give each other the preference, who may be equal or superior, both in spiritual gifts, and in temporal things, Ro 12:10 , and with respect to poor saints, to communicate cheerfully to their necessities; and with respect to strangers, to entertain them hospitably, Ro 12:13 , and as to every member, whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, to bear a part with them, rejoicing with the one, weeping with the other, Ro 12:15 , and to behave with humility, modesty, and sobriety, towards all, Ro 12:16 , and next such duties as concern the men of the world, particularly to bless, and not curse persecutors, Ro 12:14 , not to retaliate evil for evil, but to do everything that is of good report in the sight of men, Ro 12:17 , to study, if possible, to live peaceably with all men, Ro 12:18 , to bridle passion and refrain from wrath, and not seek private revenge, but leave it with the Lord to take vengeance, Ro 12:19 , on the other hand, to be kind and beneficent to enemies, by giving them food and drink when hungry and thirsty, expressed in the words of Solomon, Pr 25:21,22 , the reasons for which are, because hereby an enemy may be wrought upon, and be brought either to shame or repentance, and become a friend, Ro 12:20 , and because by doing otherwise, resenting and returning the evil, a man is conquered by it; whereas, by the other method, the enemy is conquered by good, Ro 12:21 , and it is much more commendable and honourable to be a conqueror, than to be conquered.

ROMANS CHAPTER 12**Romans 12:1**

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 12**Romans 12:1****I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,**

&c.] The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, proceeds to that which is more practical; and enforces the several duties of religion, upon the principles he had before laid down, a method generally observed by him in all his epistles. The illative particle “therefore”, shows that the following exhortations are so many conclusions, consequences, and inferences, deduced from what had been said in the latter part of the preceding chapter; that since all things are of God, and by him and to him, then the saints ought to present their bodies to him, and to know, approve, and do his will; and since they have nothing but what they have received from him, they ought not to think too highly of, or glory in their attainments. The introduction to these exhortations, is in a very kind and affectionate manner; the saints are addressed as “brethren”, and very appropriately; since this expresses the relation they stood in to the apostle, for whom he had an hearty love and concern; and therefore what he pressed them to was out of a sincere regard to their good, as well as to the glory of God; also their relation to each other, and which several of the duties he urges had a connection with; likewise their relation to God, being of his family, having one and the same Father, and so under obligation to regard his will, honour and reverence him: moreover, these things are moved, not in an imperious way, in an authoritative manner, but by way of entreaty, “I beseech you”; as an ambassador of Christ, and as though in his stead: nor are they enforced by terrors, threats, and menaces, but “by the mercies of God”; that is, the abundant mercy of God, displayed in their election, regeneration, and calling; than which, nothing can have a greater influence on a believer, to engage him to holiness of life and conversation; and shows, that the doctrines of grace are no licentious ones, nor do

they render useless precepts, exhortations, entreaties, cautions, and advice, particularly such as follow;

that ye present your bodies;

not barely that part of them commonly so called, for this is not to be understood of a mere presentation of the body in public worship: for though this ought to be, yet not without the heart engaged therein, otherwise bodily exercise will be of no avail; nor of a bare abstinence from grosser sins done in the body, and against it, and which defile and dishonour it; much less of a maceration, and keeping under the body, by watchings, fasting, &c. and still less of an offering of the body at death in a way of martyrdom, though this ought to be cheerfully complied with when called for: but by their bodies are meant, themselves, their whole souls and bodies, all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and the presenting of them, designs a devoting of them, with all readiness and willingness, to the service of God for his honour and glory, without putting any confidence in, or placing any dependence upon them; which would be sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their drag; it includes the whole of their service, conversation, and religion, internal and external. So the Jews F11 say,

“worthy is the portion of the righteous, who offer every day this offering before the Lord; and what is it? (גרמייהו ונפשיהו) , “their bodies and their souls”, which they offer before him.”

The allusion is to the rite of sacrificing, to the bringing of the slain beast, and laying it on the altar, and there presenting and offering it to the Lord. Under the Gospel dispensation all believers are priests; and the sacrifices they bring are not the bodies of slain beasts, but their own bodies, their whole selves; and these

a living sacrifice,

in opposition to the bodies of slain beasts offered under the legal dispensation, and to the dead works of such as are destitute of faith in Christ, and to the lifeless performances of the saints themselves at certain times; and designs such a presentation of themselves in the performance of religious duties, as springs from a principle of life under the quickening influences of the Spirit of God, with faith and fervency; though without any view to obtain life hereby, for that is only by the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. Another epithet of this sacrifice of our bodies to God is

holy,

in allusion to the sacrifices under the law, which were separated from common use, and devoted to God, and were not to have the least spot and blemish in them; and regards men sanctified by the Spirit of God, and whose actions flow from a principle of holiness, and are performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit; and such sacrifices as are both living and holy, cannot but be

acceptable to God

through the mediation of his Son, by whom, as the persons, the souls and bodies of his people, so their spiritual sacrifices, whether of prayer or praise, are only acceptable to him:

which is your reasonable service;

it is agreeably to reason, and especially as sanctified, that men who have their beings from God, and are upheld in them by him, and are followed with the bounties of Providence; and especially who are made new creatures, and are blessed by him with all spiritual blessings in Christ, that they should give up themselves to him, and cheerfully serve him in their day and generation; such service is also agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, the standard of filth and practice, and contain and enforce nothing but what is highly reasonable to be complied with; it is such service as lies not in the slaying of irrational creatures, but in the presenting of men endued with rational powers unto God; and is of a spiritual nature, performed by spiritual men, under the influence of the Spirit of God: and is suitable to the nature and perfections of God, and stands opposed to the corporeal and carnal service of the Jews.

Romans 12:2**And be not conformed to this world**

By this world is meant, either the Mosaic dispensation, and Jewish church state, so called in opposition to (הבטא) (עולמו) , “the world to come”, the Gospel dispensation; in which there were a worldly sanctuary, and the rites and ceremonies of which are styled the rudiments and elements of the world; to which believers in the present state are by no means to conform, there being sacrifices and ordinances of another nature, it is the will of God they should observe and attend unto: or else the men of the world are designed, carnal and unregenerate men, among whom they formerly had their conversation, from among whom they were chosen, called, and separated, and who lie and live in wickedness, and

therefore should not be conformed unto them: which is to be understood, not in a civil sense of conformity to them in garb and apparel, provided that pride and luxury are guarded against, and decency and sobriety observed, and the different abilities of persons and stations in life are attended to; or to any other civil usages and customs which are not contrary to natural and revealed religion; but of a conformity in a moral sense to the evil manners of men, to walk vainly, as other Gentiles do, to go into the same excess of riot with them; for this is contrary both to the principle and doctrine of grace, which teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and of a compliance with the men of the world in a religious sense, by joining with them in acts of idolatry, superstition, and will worship, and in anything that is contrary to the order, ordinances, and truths of the Gospel.

But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;

which regards not the first work of conversion and renovation; for in this sense these persons were transformed, metamorphosed, changed, and renewed already; but the after progress and carrying on the work of renovation, the renewing of them day by day in the spirit of their minds; see (Ephesians 4:23) (2 Corinthians 4:16) ; which believers should be desirous of, and pray for, and make use of those means which the Spirit of God owns for this purpose, attending to the spiritual exercises of religion, as reading, meditation, prayer, conference, the ministration of the word and ordinances, which is the reverse of conformity to the world: and the end to be attained hereby is,

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;

by which is meant not the secret will of God, which cannot be searched into, proved, and known, till time and facts discover it: but the revealed will of God, both in the law, as in the hands of Christ, which contains nothing but what is good; and which when done in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God, is acceptable through Christ; and is perfect as a law of liberty, and rule of walk and conversation; and which is to be proved and approved of by all the saints, who delight in it after the inward man: and also that which is contained in the Gospel; as that all that the Father had given to Christ should be redeemed by him, that these should be sanctified, and persevere to the end, and be glorified; all which is the good will of

God, an acceptable saying to sensible sinners, and such a scheme of salvation as is perfect and complete, and needs nothing to be added to it; and is, by such who are daily renewed in the spirit of their minds, more and more proved, tried, discerned, and approved of, even by all such who have their spiritual senses exercised to discern things that differ.

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given unto me

The Ethiopic version reads, the grace of God: and so two of Stephens's copies. By which the apostle intends, not that internal grace which was wrought in his soul; nor the Gospel of the grace of God, which he preached; nor the gifts of grace, which qualified him for that service; but the grace of apostleship, or that authoritative power, which he, as the apostle, received from Christ to say, command, give orders and instructions to churches, and particular persons:

to every man that is among you:

every member of the church, in whatsoever state or condition, whether in office or not; of whatsoever abilities or capacity, having gifts, whether more or less; the manifestation of the Spirit being given to everyone to profit with, for his own and the good of others:

not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think;

that is, either not to arrogate to himself what does not belong to him, and detract from others, who may have equal, if not superior, abilities to him; or not to glory in what he has, as if he had not received it, and as if it was altogether owing to his own sagacity, penetration, diligence, and industry; or not to search into things too high for him that are out of his reach, and beyond his capacity; though this is not to be understood as discouraging a search into the Scriptures of truth, the more difficult parts of it, and the more knotty points of controversy; but as forbidding inquiry into things not lawful to be searched into, or, if lawful, as requiring such a scrutiny to be made with modesty, and an humble dependence on superior light and assistance, and a discovery of it with humility and lowliness of mind;

but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith:

such ought to consider that what gifts, abilities, light, and knowledge they have, they have then, not of themselves, but from God; that they have not all faith,

and all knowledge, or do not know the whole of the faith of the Gospel only a measure of it, which is dealt out, divided, and parted to every man, some having a greater degree of evangelical light than others; and that all have some, but none all. The Syriac version renders it, "faith in measure"; one of Stephens's copies reads, "the measure of grace"; see (Ephesians 4:7) .

Romans 12:4

For as we have many members in one body

The apostle illustrates what he said last concerning God's dealing to every man the measure of faith, by comparing the church of Christ to an human body, which is but one, and has many members in union with it, and one another; and which are placed in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in proper subserviency to each other, and for the good of the whole:

and all members have not the same office,

or "action"; they do not exercise the same function, and perform the same operation, but each that which is peculiar to itself: the eye only sees, but does not hear, nor taste, nor smell; the ear only hears, but neither sees, or does any of the aforesaid things; the palate tastes, the nose smells, the hand handles, the foot walks, and the same may be observed of the other members of the body, which have not the same, but their particular offices, and all and each of them their usefulness.

Romans 12:5

So we being many are one body in Christ

This is the application of the above simile. The chosen of God, the redeemed of Christ, and those that are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit; though they are but few in comparison of the men of the world, but considered in themselves are many, and yet make up but one body, the church, of which Christ is the head: and though this general assembly; or church universal, may be distinguished into several congregational churches, and distinct communities, yet each community, consisting of divers persons, is but one body "in Christ", united and knit together by joints and bands, under him their head, Lord, and King; in him, and not in Caesar, or any earthly monarch, to distinguish this body from bodies politic, or any civil community among men:

and everyone members one of another;

as in union with Christ their head, so to one

another in love, walking in holy fellowship together, sympathizing with, and serving each other.

Romans 12:6

Having then gifts, differing

As in a natural body, the various members of it have not the same office, and do not perform the same actions, thus they have not the same, but different faculties; one has one faculty, another another; the eye has the faculty of seeing, the ear of hearing thus in the spiritual body the church, as there are different members, these members have not the same work and business assigned them; some are employed one way, and some another; also they have diversities of gifts for their different administrations and operations, and all from Christ their head, by the same Spirit, and for the service of the whole body,

according to the grace that is given unto us;

for all these gifts are not the effects of nature, the fruits of human power, diligence, and industry, but flow from the grace of God, who dispenses them when, where, and to whom he pleases in a free and sovereign manner; and therefore to be acknowledged as such, and used to his glory, and for the good of his church and people. Wherefore

whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith.

The offices here, and hereafter mentioned, are not of an extraordinary, but ordinary kind, such as are lasting, and will continue in the church unto the end of time: and are divided into two parts, which are after subdivided into other branches. The division is into "prophesying" and "ministering". By "prophesying" is meant, not foretelling things to come, though this gift was bestowed upon some, as Agabus, and others in the Christian church; but this, as it is of an extraordinary nature, so it is not stinted and limited according to the proportion of faith; but preaching the Gospel is here designed, which is the sense of the word in many places of Scripture, particularly in (1 Corinthians 13:2 1 Corinthians 13:8 1 Corinthians 13:9) (1 Corinthians 14:1 1 Corinthians 14:3-6 1 Corinthians 14:22) (1 Corinthians 14:24 1 Corinthians 14:29 1 Corinthians 14:31 1 Corinthians 14:32 1 Corinthians 14:37 1 Corinthians 14:39) . Now such who have this gift of prophecy, or of opening and explaining the Scriptures, ought to make use of it, and constantly attend toil: "let us prophesy"; diligently

prepare for it by prayer, reading and meditation, and continually exercise it as opportunity offers; nor should any difficulty and discouragement deter from it: or whereas this last clause is not in the original text, it may be supplied from (Romans 12:3) ; thus, “let us think soberly”, who have this gift, and not be elated with it, or carry it haughtily to those who attend on the exercise of it: but behave with sobriety, modesty, and humility, in the discharge thereof: “according to the proportion of faith”. There must be faith, or no prophesying; a man must believe, and therefore speak, or speak not at all; a Gospel minister ought not to be a sceptic, or in doubt about the main principles of religion; such as concern the three divine persons, the office, grace, and righteousness of Christ, and the way of salvation by him: he should be at a point in these things, should firmly believe, and with assurance assert them, nor fear to be called dogmatical on that account: he is to preach according to his faith, the proportion of it: which may be the same with the measure of it, (Romans 12:3) . And so the Syriac version reads it, (htwnmyhd atxwvm Kya) , “according to the measure of his faith”; to which the Arabic version agrees; that is, according to the measure of the gift of Christ he has received; according to the abilities bestowed on him; according to that light, knowledge, faith, and experience he has; he ought to preach up unto it, and not in the least come short of it; or by “the proportion”, or “analogy of faith”, may be meant a scheme of Gospel truths, a form of sound words, a set of principles upon the plan of the Scriptures, deduced from them, and agreeably to them; and which are all of a piece, and consistent with themselves, from which the prophet or preacher should never swerve: or the Scriptures themselves, the sure word of prophecy, the rule and standard of faith and practice: the scope of the text is to be attended to, its connection with the preceding or following verses, or both; and it is to be compared with other passages of Scripture, and accordingly to be explained: and this is to follow the rule directed to.

Romans 12:7

Or ministry, [let us wait] on our ministry

The word (diakonia) sometimes signifies the whole ecclesiastical ministry, even the office of apostleship, as well as the ordinary ministration of the Gospel; see (Acts 1:17) (6:4) ; but here “deaconship”, or the office of ministering to the poor saints, as in (Acts 6:1

) (1 Corinthians 16:15) , being a distinct office from prophesying: or preaching the word, and should be used, exercised, and attended to with diligence, care, and constancy; for such who are appointed to this office, are chosen not only to a place of honour, but of service and business, in which they should behave with prudence, sobriety, and humility:

or he that teacheth, on teaching.

The gift of prophesying or preaching is subdivided into “teaching” and “exhorting”; the one belongs to “teachers” or doctors, the other to “pastors”; as the distinction is in (Ephesians 4:11) , not that different officers and offices are intended, but different branches of the same office; and one man’s talent may lie more in the one, and another man’s in the other; and accordingly each should in his preaching attend to the gift which is most peculiar to him: if his gift lies in teaching, let him constantly employ himself in that with all sobriety and “teaching” does not design an office in the school, but in the church; it is not teaching divinity as men teach logic, rhetoric, and other arts and sciences, in the schools; but an instructing of churches and the members thereof in the doctrines of the Gospel, in order to establish and build them up in their most holy faith; see (1 Corinthians 12:28) (Ephesians 4:11 Ephesians 4:12) ; it chiefly lies in a doctrinal way of preaching, in opening, explaining, and defending the doctrines of Christ, as distinct from the practical part of the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances, in which the pastor is employed as well as in this.

Romans 12:8

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation

This is the other branch of prophesying or preaching, and which is more practical, and lies in giving a word of exhortation to the saints, as their particular cases call for; for as prophets were teachers, (Acts 13:1) ; so also exhorters, (Acts 15:32) ; and one considerable branch of the ministry, and which is more principally the pastor’s work, as well as to teach, is to exhort all sorts of persons, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, under his care, with all longsuffering and doctrine. The words will bear to be read, “he that comforteth, on consolation”; and so the Syriac version renders them, (haywbb wh anaybmd tyaw) , “and another who is a comforter, in his consolation”. Though all the ministers of the Gospel are to speak comfortably to the saints, by preaching the doctrines of free justification by Christ’s

righteousness, and remission of sins by his blood, by bringing the good news of salvation by him, and by opening the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel; yet some have a greater talent this way than others; some are “Boanergeses”, sons of thunder, (Mark 3:17) , and others “Barnabases”, sons of consolation, (Acts 4:36) ; and each should attend to that with all diligence and humility, he is best qualified for.

He that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity.

Here begins the subdivision of the deacon’s office into its several branches, “giving”, “ruling”, and “showing mercy”: by “giving” is meant, not giving of his own, or performing: acts of charity, which is common to all the members of the church, who ought liberally to contribute to the relief of the poor; but imparting or distributing the church’s money to proper objects, which is to be done “with simplicity”; with all faithfulness and integrity, without fraud or embezzling the church’s stock, with impartiality, and without respect of persons, and liberally and bountifully, as the word here used signifies; see (2 Corinthians 8:2) (9:13) ;

he that ruleth, with diligence;

deacons are the “helps, governments”, mentioned in (1 Corinthians 12:28) , who are assisting to the pastor in the government of the church; their business is, to observe the conversations of the members of the church, and to warn them that are unruly and walk disorderly, to compose differences, and prepare matters to lay before the church; a deacon is (proistamenov) , “one that goes before”; and leads on others by way of example in his conduct and conversation; or as the Syriac renders it, (avyrb Maqd) , “that stands at the head” of affairs in the church; in the management of which he ought to use all study, thoughtfulness, care and diligence:

he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness;

which is not to be understood of showing compassion to miserable objects in common, or of giving alms to necessitous persons, and which ought to be done according to the Jewish F12 canons, (twpy Mynp rbob) , “with a cheerful countenance”; and is what is highly pleasing to God, who “loves a cheerful giver”: but of a branch of the deacon’s office, whose work, among other things, is to visit the sick and distressed, and communicate to them as their wants require; all which should be done, not in a morose and frowning manner, but with a pleasant look and cheerful countenance, which makes the visit and the gift more

welcome, acceptable, and useful.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 4. 13.

Romans 12:9

Let love be without dissimulation

The apostle having given out suitable exhortations to the officers of this church, ministers and deacons, proceeds to stir up to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of such duties as were common to all the members of the church; and begins with “love”, which is the cement of saints, and the bond of perfectness, without which all the gifts that men have, the profession they make, and works they do are of no avail, and they themselves nothing. Here it is to be taken, in the largest and most comprehensive sense, for love to God, Christ, the saints, and fellow creatures, and ought, with respect to each, to “be without dissimulation”; or “hypocrisy”: love to God should be with all the heart, soul, and mind, otherwise the fear of him, and obedience to him, will be only outward, formal, customary, and hypocritical; love to Christ should be with sincerity, and so it is where it is right, hearty, and genuine; such can appeal to him as the searcher of hearts, that from the heart they love him; and love to one another should be not in word, and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth; yea, the love professed to fellow creatures, ought never to be through fear of men or mercenary views, but honest, upright, and sincere.

Abhor that which is evil;

sin, both in its principle and in its actings; it being hateful to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, contrary to the nature, being, and perfections of God, a transgression of his righteous law, exceeding sinful in itself, and pernicious in its effects and consequences; for all which it is to be abhorred by the saints: the word (apostugountev) , here used, designs the greatest aversion imaginable, a turning away from it, as what is the most loathsome, detestable, and abominable; and such an hatred of it with horror, as of the Stygian lake, or hell itself:

cleave to that which is good;

to God, who is originally, infinitely, and immutably good; who is good in his nature, and works, and to all his creatures, and especially his chosen people, and therefore should be cleaved unto; to his will, his ways, and worship; and to Christ the good shepherd of the

sheep, the Lamb that is to be followed and cleaved unto, whithersoever he goes; and to the good Spirit of God, after whom we should walk, and not after the flesh; and to the good people of God, assembling with whom should not be forsaken; and to the good Gospel of Christ, and the truths of it, which should be held fast; and to the ordinances of the Gospel, which ought to be constantly attended on; and to every good work, to which we should be ready, careful to maintain, and ever follow, both among ourselves and all men: they should even be glued unto it, as the word here signifies.

Romans 12:10

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love,

&c.] This is one branch of that love, before advised to, which should be unfeigned, and without guile and deceit. The objects of this grace are “brethren”, not in such sense as all the descendants of Adam are, or men of the same country be, or as such who are born of the same parents in a natural sense are; to each of whom love is due under their respective characters and relations: but such who are so in a spiritual sense, who are born of God, are of his household, belong to his family, are the brethren of Christ, and one another; and are either members of the same church, incorporated together in the same church state, or at least members of Christ, and of the church universal. Now love to these should be kind, tender, and affectionate, reciprocal and mutual; such should love one another; there should be no love wanting on either side; and it ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, though of different gifts, light, knowledge and experience, or whether high or low, rich or poor; and should show itself by bearing one another’s burdens, bearing with, and forbearing each other, forgiving one another, and by edifying one another in their most holy faith, and praying with, and for one another.

In honour preferring one another;

saints should think honourably of one another, and entertain an honourable esteem of each other; yea, should esteem each other better than themselves; and not indulge evil surmises, and groundless jealousies of one another, which is contrary to that love that thinks no evil. They should speak honourably of each other in Christian company, and discourage that evil practice of whisperings, backbitings, and innuendos; they should treat each other with honour and respect in

their common conversation, and especially when met together as a church of Christ. They should go before each other in giving honour, and showing respect, as the word (prohgoumenov) , signifies: they should set each other an example; and which also may be taken into the sense of the word, should prevent one another, not waiting until respect is shown on one side to return it again. Nor does this rule at all break in upon that order that should subsist, and be maintained in bodies civil and ecclesiastical, which requires superior honour to be given to persons according to their character, office, and station in which they are.

Romans 12:11

Not slothful in business

Meaning not worldly business, or the affairs of life; though slothfulness in this respect is scandalous to human nature, and especially in persons under a profession of religion; men should diligently pursue their lawful callings for the support of themselves and families, and the interest of Christ: but spiritual business, the affairs of piety and religion, the service of God, private and public, to which we should not be backward, nor slothful in the performance of; such as preaching, hearing, reading, praying, and other ordinances of God; yea, we should be ready and forward to every good work, and particularly, and which may be here greatly designed, ministering to the poor saints in their necessity; in doing which we show that kind, tender, affectionate, brotherly love, and give that honour and respect, at least that part of it, which is relief, required in the foregoing verse; see (Hebrews 6:10-12) . Remarkable is that saying of R. Tarphon F13,

“The day is short, and the work great, (Mylue Mylewphw) , “and workmen slothful”, and the reward much, and the master of the house is urgent.”

Fervent in spirit;

in their own spirits, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the cause of religion, in imitation of Christ himself, and as Phinehas and Elijah were; which fervency of spirit is opposed to that lukewarmness of soul, (Revelation 3:16) , that coldness of affection, and leaving of the first love, (Revelation 2:4) , so much complained of, and resented by Christ in his people: or else in the Spirit of God; for there may be fervency in men’s spirits, which comes not from the Spirit of

God, as in the Jews, and particularly Saul, before his conversion, who had “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge”, (Romans 10:2) ; but when “the love of God is shed abroad in the heart” by the Spirit of God, (Romans 5:5) , this will make a man’s spirit fervent in the service of God, for which the apostle would have these believers concerned. A disciple of the wise men among the Jews is F14 said to be (xtr) , “fervent”, because the law is as a boiling pot unto him; much more should a disciple of Christ be fervent, who has the Gospel of Christ, the love of God, and the grace of the Spirit to inflame his soul with true zeal and fervour.

Serving the Lord;

some copies read, “serving time”: the likeness of the words, (kairov) and (kuriov) , especially in an abbreviation, may have occasioned this different reading; which should it be followed, is not to be understood in an ill sense, of temporizing, or time serving, of men’s accommodating themselves, their sentiments and conduct, according to the times in which they live, in order to escape reproach and persecution; but of redeeming the time, improving every season to do good, and taking every opportunity of serving God. But as the reading our version follows is confirmed by authentic copies, and by the Syriac, and other Oriental versions, it is best to adhere to it: by “the Lord” is here meant either God, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the alone object of divine service and religious worship; or the Lord Jesus Christ, who most frequently goes by the name of Lord in the New Testament; and who is the one Lord, whose we are and whom we should continually serve, being under the greatest obligations to him, not only as our Creator, but as our head, husband, and Redeemer. Very rightly does the apostle premise fervency in spirit to serving the Lord; for without the Spirit of God there is no true worshipping and serving of him, and which ought to be done with fervency as well as with constancy. The Syriac version renders it, “serve our Lord”.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 15.

F14 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 4. 1.

Romans 12:12

Rejoicing in hope

Of the glory of God, than the hope of which nothing can make a believer more cheerful in this world; the saints’ joy is therefore called the “rejoicing of the hope”,

(Hebrews 3:6) . This is placed between serving the Lord, and being patient in tribulation; for nothing tends more to animate the people of God to a cheerful serving of him, or to make them more patient under afflictions, than a hope of being for ever with the Lord:

patient in tribulation;

whilst the saints are in this world they must expect tribulation; their way to heaven lies through it; and it becomes them to be patient under it, not murmuring against God, on the one hand, nor reviling of men, on the other.

Continuing instant in prayer:

prayer is needful at all times, but especially in a time of tribulation and distress, whether inward or outward. This should be made without ceasing; saints should watch unto it with all perseverance; men should pray always, and not faint; never give out and over, or be discouraged. This advice is rightly given and placed here, to teach us that we are to go to the throne of grace continually for fresh supplies of grace, and strength to enable us to exercise the grace, and perform the duties exhorted to both in preceding and following verses.

Romans 12:13

Distributing to the necessity of saints

Or “communicating”, as many versions render the word; “distributing” more properly belongs to the officers of the church, the deacons, and communicating to the members of it in common. All men in general are to be relieved that are in want, even our very enemies, and particularly such as are our own flesh and blood, nearly related to us, aged parents and especially they that are of the household of faith, here called “saints”; and indeed, such only come under the care and notice of a church: and they are such, whom God has set apart for himself, has chosen in his Son, that they should be holy; whom Christ has sanctified, or whose sins he has expiated by his blood; and to whom he is made sanctification; and in whose hearts a work of grace and holiness is wrought by the Spirit of God, which is the sanctification of the Spirit they are chosen through, as a mean to eternal salvation by Christ; and in consequence of this, they live soberly, righteously, and godly, and have their conversations as become the Gospel of Christ: and such as these, being in necessitous circumstances, are to be communicated to; for not all, or any of the saints, but only such as are in “necessity”, are here pointed at; it is

not communicating to the saints, but to their necessity, which is recommended. It is the will and pleasure of God, that some of his dear children should be in strait circumstances of life, be reduced to want and distress, partly to try their own graces, their faith and trust in God, and dependence on him; and partly the graces of others, the charity, liberality, and beneficence of those who have of this world's goods: and who are the persons that are to "communicate", not words only, saying, be warmed and filled, and give nothing; but their substance, they are to deal their bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and give a portion to as many as are in need: and these acts of giving and receiving, are one way by which the saints have communication with each other, and which is suggested by the word "communicating" here used; for fellowship does not lie merely in private conversation, and in sitting down together at the Lord's table, but in "communicating to one another such things" as are needful, as for the soul, so for the body. Some copies read, "communicating to the memories of the saints"; not making images of them, and praying to them, but speaking well and honourably of them, and imitating them in what they did well; see (Proverbs 10:7).

Given to hospitality;

or, as it may be rendered, "pursuing", or "following after love to strangers"; which is properly hospitality: respect is to be shown not to such only who are members of the same community with us, but also to such of the people of God, that may be of another country, or of some distant parts of our own, not before known by us; who by persecution, and distress of some sort or another, or by some providence or another, are obliged to remove from their native place. These we are to love, and show our love to, not only by directing and advising, but, if need be, by giving them food and raiment, and lodging them: this is a duty incumbent on ministers of the Gospel, and on private members, and on all who are in any capacity to perform it; and which should be done cheerfully, and without grudging; and what persons should use, inure, and give themselves to, yea, should seek after, and call to objects of it; as Abraham and Lot did, who thereby entertained angels unawares, and is what the apostle here means by pursuing and following after it.

Romans 12:14

Bless them which persecute you

It is the lot of God's, people in this world to be persecuted by the men of it, in some shape or another, either by words or deeds; either by reviling and reproaching them, and speaking all manner of evil of them; or by hindering them the free exercise of religious worship, by confiscation of their goods, imprisonment of their persons, by violently torturing their bodies, and taking away their lives; under all which circumstances they are taught to

bless

them; that is, to pray for them, that God would show them their evil, give repentance to them, and the remission of their sins; which is the order Christ gave to his disciples, (Matthew 5:44) ; and encouraged to an observance of, by his own example, (Luke 23:34) ; and has been followed herein by his disciples and apostles, (Acts 7:60) (1 Corinthians 4:12 1 Corinthians 4:13) . Moreover, by "blessing" may be meant, giving them good words, mild and soft answers, "not rendering evil for evil, railing for railing"; (1 Peter 3:9) ; but, on the contrary, blessing, in imitation of Christ, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again", (1 Peter 2:23) : "bless",

and curse not:

to have a mouth full of cursing and bitterness, (Romans 3:14) , is the character of an unregenerate man, and what by no means suits one who names the name of Christ; for blessing and cursing to proceed out of the same mouth, is as absurd and unnatural, as if it should be supposed that a fountain should send forth sweet water and bitter, or salt and fresh, (James 3:10-12) . The imprecations upon wicked men, used by David and other good men, are no contradictions to this rule; since they were made under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and were predictions of God's vengeance, which in righteous judgment should fall on them, and are not to be drawn into an example by us.

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with them that do rejoice

Not in anything sinful and criminal, in a thing of nought, in men's own boastings; all such rejoicing is evil, and not to be joined in; but in things good and laudable, as in outward prosperity; and to rejoice with such, is a very difficult task; for unless persons have a near concern in the prosperity of others, they are very apt to envy it, or to murmur and repine, that they are not in equal, or superior circumstances; and also in

things spiritual, with such who rejoice in the discoveries of God's love to their souls, in the views of interest in Christ, and of peace, pardon, and righteousness by him, and in hope of the glory of God; when such souls make their boast in the Lord, the humble hearing thereof will be glad, and will, as they ought to do, join with them in magnifying the Lord, and will exalt his name together:

and weep with them that weep;

so Christ, as he rejoiced with them that rejoiced, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, wept with them that wept, with Mary at the grave of Lazarus. The design of these rules is to excite and encourage sympathy in the saints with each other, in all conditions inward and outward, and with respect to things temporal and spiritual; in imitation of Christ their great high priest, who cannot but be touched with the infirmities of his people; and as founded upon, and arising from, their relation to each other, as members of the same body; see (1 Corinthians 12:26) ;

Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind one towards another

Which is not to be understood of the sameness of their judgment, or of their agreement in sentiments, espousing the same doctrines, observing the same ordinances, and in the same manner, and attending to the same form of discipline; but of their having the same love, and being of the same accord and affection to one another, entertaining the same good opinion, or a better, of others than of themselves; and so the Syriac version renders the passage, "what ye think of yourselves, think also of your brethren": think of one another, as equally interested in the love of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, blessed with the same spiritual blessings in him, and called in the same hope of your calling; and do not think of one another, as being one richer or wiser than another, do not value yourselves upon that:

mind not high things;

be not highminded, do not think too highly of yourselves, and despise others; meddle not with, nor grasp at things too high for you, that are out of your reach, and beyond your capacity; nor seek great things for yourselves, as riches, honours, &c. nor covet great company:

but condescend to men of low estate;

or "to low things"; be content with mean and low things in life, and disdain not to take notice of and

converse with, men in a low condition, whether in things temporal or spiritual; who may be poor in this world, be very ignorant and illiterate, as to general knowledge and learning; be men of mean parts and abilities, of very small gifts, and be weak in faith and experience; condescend to their weaknesses, bear their infirmities, and become all things to them for their good, and God's glory: consider the apostle is writing to citizens of Rome, who might be tempted to look upon themselves above others, and to look disdainfully upon others, as citizens too often do on country people, as if they were below them, as persons of low life to them:

be not wise in your own conceits;

see (Proverbs 3:7) . This is attended with bad consequences, spoils a man's usefulness, prevents his improvement in knowledge, tempts him to reject all counsel and advice given him, and to treat his fellow creatures and Christians with haughtiness and insolence, and exposes him to the scorn and contempt of men: or "be not wise by or with yourselves"; imagining you have all the wisdom, and others have none; or keeping it to yourselves, what wisdom you have communicate it to others; the Ethiopic version reads, "say not, we are wise"; see (Job 12:2 Job 12:3) .

Romans 12:17

Recompence to no man evil for evil

Neither evil words for evil words, railing for railing; nor evil deeds for evil deeds, one ill turn for another; nor the evil of punishment for the evil of fault, unless it be by persons, who under God have an authority to inflict it; as the civil magistrate, who "is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil", (Romans 13:4) ; but private revenge is what is here forbidden:

providing things honest in the sight of all men.

The Vulgate Latin reads, "not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men"; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "in the sight of God and in the sight of men", which clause seems to have crept in here, out of (2 Corinthians 8:21) . The words are not to be understood of a man's providing things honest, decent, and commendable, as suitable food and raiment for his family, in the sight of all men, to the honour of religion, and the credit of his profession, which is right to be done; but of a provident, thoughtful, and studious concern, to do everything that is laudable and of good

report among men. The Syriac version renders the words alter this manner, (אלא נתבטל לכונו דחברונו טבחה) , “but be careful to do well”, or exercise beneficence before all men; either restraining it to acts of beneficence, even to them that do us ill, in opposition to rendering evil to them; or applying it to all offices of humanity, and every good work, which are to be done in the sight of men; not merely to be seen of them, and in a vainglorious way, in order to obtain their esteem and applause, as did the Pharisees; but to avoid offence; to put, to silence, by well doing, the ignorance of wicked men; and to shame them that falsely accuse the good conversation of the saints; and to recommend the Gospel and true religion, and win men over to it thereby, and give an occasion to them of glorifying God.

Romans 12:18

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably,

&c.] Or be at peace, seek after peace, pursue it, and cultivate it:

with all men;

with those that we are immediately concerned with, in a natural relation; so husbands should live peaceably with their wives, and wives with their husbands; parents with their children, and children with their parents; masters with their servants, and servants with their masters; and one brother, relation, and friend, with another: and so with all we are concerned with in a spiritual relation, as members of Christ, and in the same church state; such should be at peace among themselves, (1 Thessalonians 5:13) ; peace should rule in their hearts, (Colossians 3:15) , and they should study to keep “the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace”, (Ephesians 4:3) : yea, with all we are concerned in a civil sense; saints should live peaceably in the neighbourhood, towns, cities, and countries, where they dwell, and show themselves to be the quiet in the land; should pray for the peace of the place where they are; and do all that in them lies to promote it, by living themselves peaceably and quietly, in all godliness and honesty; yea, they should live peaceably with their very enemies, “if it be possible”; which is rightly put, for there are some persons of such tempers and dispositions, that it is impossible to live peaceably with; for when others are for peace, they are for war; and in some cases it is not only impracticable, but would be unlawful; as when it cannot be done consistent with holiness of life and

conversation, with the edification of others, the truths of the Gospel, the interest of religion, and the glory of God; these are things that are never to be sacrificed for the sake of peace with men: the apostle adds another limitation of this rule, “as much as lieth in you”; for more than this is not required of us; nothing should be wanting on our parts; every step should be taken to cultivate and maintain peace; the blame should lie wholly on the other side; it becomes the saints to live peaceably themselves, if others will not with them.

Romans 12:19

Dearly beloved

This affectionate appellation the apostle makes use of, expressing his great love to them, the rather to work upon them, and move them to an attention to what he is about to say; which they might assure themselves was in great tenderness to them, for their good, as well as the glory of God: moreover, he may hereby suggest to them, not only that they were dear to him, but that they were greatly beloved of God, that they were high in his favour and affection; and this he might hint unto them, in order to melt them into love to their fellow Christians and fellow creatures, and even to their enemies, and never think of private revenge:

avenge not yourselves;

this is no ways contrary to that revenge, a believer has upon sin, and the actings of it, which follows on true evangelical repentance for it, (2 Corinthians 7:11) , and lies in a displicency at it, and himself for it, and in abstaining from it, and fighting against it; nor to that revenge a church may take of the disobedience of impenitent and incorrigible offenders, by laying censures on them, withdrawing from them, and rejecting them from their communion; nor to that revenge which civil magistrates may execute upon them that do evil; but this only forbids and condemns private revenge in private persons, for private injuries done, and affronts given:

but rather give place to wrath;

either to a man’s own wrath, stirred up by the provocations given him; let him not rush upon revenge immediately; let him sit down and breathe upon it; let him “give” (arta) , “space”, unto it, as the Syriac, which may signify time as well as place; and by taking time his wrath will, subside, he will cool and come to himself, and think better on it: or to the wrath of the injurious person, by declining him, as Jacob did Esau,

till his wrath was over; or by patiently hearing without resistance the evil done, according to the advice of Christ, (Matthew 5:39 Matthew 5:40) ; or to the wrath of God, leave all with him, and to the day of his wrath and righteous judgment, who will render to every man according to his works; commit yourselves to him that judgeth righteously, and never think of avenging your own wrongs; and this sense the following words incline to,

for it is written,

(Deuteronomy 32:35) ;

vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;

vengeance belongs to God, and to him only; it is proper and peculiar to him, not to Heathen deities, one of which they call (dikh) , “vengeance”; see (Acts 28:4) ; nor to Satan, who is of a revengeful spirit, and is styled the enemy and the avenger; nor to men, unless to magistrates under God, who are revengers and executioners of his wrath on wicked men; otherwise it solely belongs to God the lawgiver, whose law is broken, and against whom sin is committed: and there is reason to believe he will “repay” it, from the holiness of his nature, the strictness of his justice, his power and faithfulness, his conduct towards his own people, even to his Son, as their surety; nor will he neglect, but in his own time will avenge his elect, which cry unto him day and night; and who therefore should never once think of avenging themselves, but leave it with their God, to whom it belongs.

Romans 12:20

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him

These words are taken from (Proverbs 25:21 Proverbs 25:22) , and to be understood, as a Jewish F15 writer observes, (wemvmk) , according to “their literal sense”; though some of the Rabbins explain them in an allegorical way, of the corruption of nature. The Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, reads “but if”; so far should the saints be from meditating revenge upon their enemies, that they should do good unto them, as Christ directs, (Matthew 5:44) , by feeding them when hungry, and giving drink unto them when thirsty:

if he thirst give him drink;

which includes all offices of humanity and beneficence to be performed unto them: the reason, or argument inducing hereunto is,

for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head;

not to do him hurt, not to aggravate his condemnation, as if this would be a means of bringing down the wrath of God the more fiercely on him, which is a sense given by some; as if this would be an inducement to the saints to do such acts of kindness; which is just the reverse of the spirit and temper of mind the apostle is here cultivating; but rather the sense is, that by so doing, his conscience would be stung with a sense of former injuries done to his benefactor, and he be filled with shame on account of them, and be brought to repentance for them, and to love the person he before hated, and be careful of doing him any wrong for the future; all which may be considered as a prevailing motive to God’s people to act the generous part they are here moved to: in the passage referred to, (Proverbs 25:21 Proverbs 25:22) , “bread” and “water” are mentioned as to be given, which include all the necessaries of life: and it is added for encouragement, “and the Lord shall reward thee”. The sense given of this passage by some of the Jewish commentators on it agrees with what has been observed in some measure; says one F16 of them,

“when he remembers the food and drink thou hast given him, thou shall burn him, as if thou puttest coals upon his head to burn him, (er Kl twvem rwmvyw) , and “he will take care of doing thee any ill”;”

that is, for the time to come: and another of them observes F17 that

“this matter will be hard unto him, as if thou heapest coals on his head to burn him, (wtvb bwrn) , “because of the greatness of his shame”, on account of the good that he shall receive from thee, for the evil which he hath rendered to thee.”

This advice of showing kindness to enemies, and against private revenge, is very contrary to the dictates of human nature, as corrupted by sin. The former of these Julian the emperor represents.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 as a “paradox”, though he owns it to be lawful, and a good action, to give clothes and food to enemies in war; and the latter, to revenge an injury, he says F19, is a law common to all men, Greeks and Barbarians; but the Gospel and the grace of God teach us another

lesson.

F15 Jarchi in Prov. xxv. 21.

F16 R. Aben Ezra in loc.

F17 R. Levi ben Gersom in loc. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 147. 2.

F18 Fragment. inter opera, par. 1. p. 533.

F19 Ad Atheniens. p. 501.

Romans 12:21

Be not overcome of evil

Neither of the evil one, Satan, who is very busy to stir up the corruption of nature to an hatred of enemies, and to seek revenge; but give no place nor heed unto him, resist him, and he will flee from you, (James 4:7) ; “put on the whole armour of God”, (Ephesians 6:11) , whereby you may defend yourselves, that he cannot touch you: nor of the evil of sin that dwells in you; “for whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage”, (2 Peter 2:19) ; nor of the evil of the man that has done you an injury, as you will be, if you return evil for evil, or take any steps and measures to avenge yourselves; for then not you, but he that has done you the wrong, will be the conqueror:

but overcome evil with good;

overcome the evil man, and the evil he has done you, by doing good to him, by feeding him when hungry, by giving him drink when thirsty, by clothing him when naked, and by doing other offices of kindness and humanity to him; which is most likely to win upon him, and of an enemy to make him your friend: and if not, however it will show that you are conquerors, yea, “more than conquerors”, (Romans 8:37) , through the grace and strength of him that has loved you, over Satan, over the corruptions of your own hearts, and over the malice and wickedness of your enemies.

INTRODUCTION ROMANS 13

The principal things contained in this chapter, enjoined the saints, are the duties of subjection to magistrates, love to one another, and to all men, and temperance and chastity in themselves: it begins with duties relating to the civil magistrates, requiring obedience of everyone unto them, Ro 13:1 , and that for these reasons, because the civil magistracy, or government, is by divine appointment; wherefore to obey them in things of a civil nature, is to obey God; and to resist them is to resist God; and also because of the pernicious consequence of such resistance,

damnation to themselves, Ro 13:2 , for the magistrate not only causes terror by penal laws, but he inflicts punishment on delinquents, and is the executioner of God’s wrath and vengeance on such, Ro 13:3,4 , and likewise because of the profit and advantage to obedient subjects; such not only have the good will and esteem of their rulers, and are commended by them, but are defended and protected in their persons and properties, Ro 13:3,4 , moreover, the apostle enforces the necessity of subjection to them, not only in order to avoid punishment, but to answer a good conscience; this duty being according to the light of nature, and the dictates of a natural conscience; which if awake, must be uneasy with a contrary behaviour, Ro 13:5 , and for the same reason he urges the payment of tribute to them, as well as on account of the reasonableness of it, taken from magistrates spending their time, and using their talents, in an attendance on the service of the public, Ro 13:6 , and which is further confirmed by the general rule of justice and equity, or of doing that which is just and right to everyone, of which particulars are given, Ro 13:7 , and then after a general exhortation to pay all sorts of debts owing to superiors, inferiors, or equals, the apostle passes to the debt of love owing to one another, and to all mankind; which is exhorted to on this consideration, that the performance of it is a fulfilling the law, Ro 13:8 , which is proved, by showing that the several precepts of the law, of which an enumeration is given, are reducible to, and are included in love to our neighbours as ourselves, Ro 13:9 , and since it is the nature of love not to work ill, but to do good to the neighbour, the conclusion follows, that it must be as asserted, that love is the fulfilment of the law, and ought by all means to be attended to, as a principal duty of religion, Ro 13:10 , next the apostle proceeds to exhort the saints to a watchful, chaste, sober, and temperate course of life; as being perfectly agreeable to the privileges they enjoyed, to the present condition they were in, and to that future state of happiness they were in expectation of: he exhorts to be watchful and sober, and not indulge sleep and slothfulness, in consideration of the time in which they were, and with which they were acquainted, it being not night, but day; at least the one was wearing off, and the other coming on; the time of life being short, and the day of salvation approaching nearer and nearer, Ro 13:11,12 , wherefore such actions should be done, as are agreeable to the day, and not the night, to light, and not darkness; and particularly such works of darkness are dissuaded from, which are contrary to temperance and

sobriety, as rioting, and drunkenness; and to chastity, as chambering; and wantonness; and to peace and concord, as strife and envying, which frequently follow upon the former: and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to faith in Christ, and an imitation of him, expressed in a figurative way by a metaphor, taken from the putting on of garments; and with a dehortation from an immoderate provision for the flesh, so as to promote, excite, and cherish, the lusts of it, Ro 13:13 .

ROMANS CHAPTER 13

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting

and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 13

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers

The apostle having finished his exhortations to this church, in relation to the several duties incumbent upon both officers and private Christians, as members of a church, and with reference to each other, and their moral conduct in the world; proceeds to advise, direct, and exhort them to such duties as were relative to them as members of a civil society; the former chapter contains his Christian Ethics, and this his Christian Politics. There was the greater reason to insist upon the latter, as well as on the former, since the primitive saints greatly lay under the imputation of being seditious persons and enemies to the commonwealth; which might arise from a very great number of them being Jews, who scrupled subjection to the Heathen magistrates, because they were the seed of Abraham, and by a law were not to set one as king over them, that was a stranger, and not their own brother, and very unwillingly bore the Roman yoke, and paid tribute to Caesar: hence the Christians in common were suspected to be of the same principles; and of all the Jews none were more averse to the payment of taxes to the Roman magistrates than the Galilaeans; see (Acts 5:37) (Luke 13:1) . And this being the name by which Christ and his followers were commonly called, might serve to strengthen the above suspicion of them, and charge against them. Moreover, some Christians might be tempted to think that they should not be subject to Heathen magistrates; since they were generally wicked men, and violent persecutors of them; and that it was one branch of their Christian liberty to be freed from subjection to them: and certain it is, that there were a set of loose and licentious persons, who bore the name of Christians, that despised dominion, and spoke evil of dignities; wherefore the apostle judged it advisable especially to exhort the church of Rome, and the members who dwelt there, where was the seat of power and civil government, so to behave towards their superiors, that they might set a good example to the Christians in the several parts of the empire, and wipe off the aspersion that was cast upon them, as if they were enemies to magistracy and civil power. By

“the higher powers”, he means not angels, sometimes called principalities and powers; for unto these God hath not put in subjection his people under the Gospel dispensation; nor ecclesiastical officers, or those who are in church power and authority; for they do not bear the temporal sword, nor have any power to inflict corporeal punishment: but civil magistrates are intended, see (Titus 3:1) ; and these not only supreme magistrates, as emperors and kings, but all inferior and subordinate ones, acting in commission under them, as appears from (1 Peter 2:13 1 Peter 2:14) , which are called “powers”, because they are invested with power and authority over others, and have a right to exercise it in a proper way, and in proper cases; and the “higher” or super eminent ones, because they are set in high places, and have superior dignity and authority to others. The persons that are to be subject to them are “every soul”; not that the souls of men, distinct from their bodies, are under subjection to civil magistrates; for of all things they have the least to do with them, their power and jurisdiction not reaching to the souls, the hearts, and consciences of men, especially in matters of religion, but chiefly to their bodies, and outward civil concerns of life: but the meaning is, that every man that has a soul, every rational creature, ought to be subject to civil government. This is but his reasonable service, and which he should from his heart, and with all his soul, cheerfully perform. In short, the sense is, that every man should be subject: this is an Hebraism, a common way of speaking among the Jews, who sometimes denominate men from one part, and sometimes from another; sometimes from the body or flesh, thus “all flesh is grass”, (Isaiah 40:6) , that is, all men are frail; and sometimes from the soul, “all souls are mine”, (Ezekiel 18:4) , all belong to me; as here, “every soul”, that is, every man, all the individuals of mankind, of whatsoever sex, age, state, or condition, ecclesiastics not excepted: the pope, and his clergy, are not exempted from civil jurisdiction; nor any of the true ministers of the Gospel; the priests under the law were under the civil government; and so was Christ himself, and his apostles, who paid tribute to Caesar; yea, even Peter particularly, whose successor the pope of Rome pretends to be. “Subjection” to the civil magistrates designs and includes all duties relative to them; such as showing them respect, honour, and reverence suitable to their stations; speaking well of them, and their administration; using them with candour, not bearing hard upon them for little matters, and allowing for ignorance of the secret springs of many of their actions

and conduct, which if known might greatly justify them; wishing well to them, and praying constantly, earnestly, and heartily for them; observing their laws and injunctions; obeying their lawful commands, which do not contradict the laws of God, nature, and right reason; and paying them their just dues and lawful tribute, to support them in their office and dignity:

for there is no power but of God;

God is the fountain of all power and authority; the streams of power among creatures flow from him; the power that man has over all the creatures, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea, is originally of God, and by a grant from him; the lesser powers, and the exercises of them, in the various relations men stand in to one another, are of God, as the power the husband has over the wife, parents over their children, and masters over their servants; and so the higher power that princes have over their subjects: for it is the God of heaven that sets up kings, as well as pulls them down; he is the King of kings, from whom they derive their power and authority, from whom they have the right of government, and all the qualifications for it; it is by him that kings reign, and princes decree justice.

The powers that be are ordained of God.

The order of magistracy is of God; it is of his ordination and appointment, and of his ordering, disposing, and fixing in its proper bounds and limits. The several forms of government are of human will and pleasure; but government itself is an order of God. There may be men in power who assume it of themselves, and are of themselves, and not of God; and others that abuse the power that is lodged in them; who, though they are by divine permission, yet not of God’s approbation and good will. And it is observable, that the apostle speaks of powers, and not persons, at least, not of persons, but under the name of powers, to show that he means not this, or the other particular prince or magistrate, but the thing itself, the office and dignity of magistracy itself; for there may be some persons, who may of themselves usurp this office, or exercise it in a very illegal way, who are not of God, nor to be subject to by men. The apostle here both uses the language, and speaks the sentiments of his countrymen the Jews, who are wont to call magistrates, “powers”; hence those sayings were used among them; says Shemaiah F20,

“אל תהיה לרשות”, “be not too familiar with the power”.

that is, with a magistrate, which oftentimes is dangerous. Again,

“היי זהירי ברשות”, says F21 Rabban Gamaliel, “take heed of the power” (i.e. of magistrates), for they do not suffer a man to come near them, but in necessity, and then they appear as friends for their own advantage, but will not stand by a man in the time of distress.”

Moreover, after this manner they explain F23 (Proverbs 5:8) ,

“remove thy way far from her”, this is heresy; “and come not nigh the door of her house”, (twvrh wz) , “this is the power”. The gloss on it is, magistrates, because they set their eyes upon rich men to kill them, and take away their substance.”

And a little after it is observed,

“the horse leech hath two daughters, crying, give, give”, (Proverbs 30:15) : it is asked, what is the meaning of give, give? Says Mar Ukba, there are two daughters which cry out of hell, and say in this world, give, give, and they are heresy, (twvrhw) , “and the civil power”.

The gloss on this place is,

“Heresy cries, bring a sacrifice to the idol; “Civil Power” cries, bring money, and gifts, and revenues, and tribute to the king.”

Nevertheless, they look upon civil government to be of divine appointment. They say F24, that

“no man is made a governor below, except they proclaim him above;”

i.e. unless he is ordained of God: yea, they allow F25 the Roman empire to be of God, than which no government was more disagreeable to them.

“When R. Jose ben Kisma was sick, R. Chanina ben Tradion went to visit him; he said unto him, Chanina, my brother, my brother, knowest thou not that this nation, (the Romans) (hwkylmh Mymvh Nm) , “have received their empire” from God? for it hath laid waste his house, and hath burnt his temple, and has slain his saints, and destroyed his good men, and yet it endures.”

Nay, they frequently affirm F26, that the meanest office of power among men was of divine appointment. This is the apostle’s first argument for subjection to the civil magistrate.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 10.

F21 Ib. c. 2. sect. 3.

F23 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 1.

F24 In Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 178.

F25 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 18. 1.

F26 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 2. Jarchi in 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

Romans 13:2

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power

The office of magistracy, and such as are lawfully placed in it, and rightly exercise it; who denies that there is, or ought to be any such order among men, despises it, and opposes it, and withdraws himself from it, and will not be subject to it in any form:

resisteth the ordinance of God,

the will and appointment of God, whose pleasure it is that there should be such an office, and that men should be subject to it. This is not to be understood, as if magistrates were above the laws, and had a lawless power to do as they will without opposition; for they are under the law, and liable to the penalty of it, in case of disobedience, as others; and when they make their own will a law, or exercise a lawless tyrannical power, in defiance of the laws of God, and of the land, to the endangering of the lives, liberties, and properties of subjects, they may be resisted, as Saul was by the people of Israel, when he would have took away the life of Jonathan for the breach of an arbitrary law of his own, and that too without the knowledge of it, (1 Samuel 14:45) ; but the apostle is speaking of resisting magistrates in the right discharge of their office, and in the exercise of legal power and authority:

and they that resist them, in this sense,

shall receive to themselves damnation;

that is, punishment; either temporal, and that either by the hand of the magistrate himself, who has it in his power to punish mutiny, sedition, and insurrection, and any opposition to him in the just discharge of his duty; or at the hand of God, in righteous judgment, for their

disobedience to an ordinance of his; as in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who opposed themselves both to the civil and sacred government of the people of Israel, (Numbers 26:9) ; and were swallowed up alive in the earth, (Numbers 26:10) : or eternal punishment, unless the grace of God prevents; for “the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever”, (Jude 1:13) , for such persons, who, among other of their characters, are said to “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities”, (Jude 1:8) . This is another argument persuading to subjection to magistrates.

Romans 13:3

For rulers are not a terror to good works

That is, to them that do good works in a civil sense; who behave well in the neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and countries where they dwell. The apostle seems to anticipate an objection made against governors, as if there was something very terrible and formidable in them; and which might be taken up from the last clause of the preceding verse; and which he removes by observing, that governors neither do, nor ought to inject terror into men that behave well, obey the laws, and keep a good decorum among their fellow subjects, not doing any injury to any man’s person, property, and estate. The Jews F1 have a saying,

“that a governor that injects more fear into the people, than is for the honour of God, shall be punished, and shall not see his son a disciple of a wise man.”

But to the evil;

to wicked men, who make no conscience of doing hurt to their fellow creatures, by abusing their persons, defrauding them of their substance, and by various illicit methods doing damage to them; to such, rulers are, and ought to be terrors; such are to be menaced, and threatened with inflicting upon them the penalty of the laws they break; and which ought to be inflicted on them by way of punishment to them, and for the terror of others. R. Chanina, the Sagan of the priests F2, used to say,

“pray for the peace of the kingdom, for if there was no (מורא) , “fear”, (i.e. a magistrate to inject fear,) one man would devour another alive.”

Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power?

of the civil magistrate, in power and authority, to oppose him, to refuse subjection to him, to break the laws, which, according to his office, he is to put in execution.

Do that which is good:

in a civil sense, between man and man, by complying with the laws of the land, which are not contrary to the laws of God; for of doing good in a spiritual and religious sense he is no judge:

and thou shalt have praise of the same;

shall be commended as a good neighbour, a good citizen, and a good commonwealth’s man; an honest, quiet, peaceable man, that does not disturb the peace of civil society, but strengthens and increases it.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 25. sect. 1.

F2 Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2.

Romans 13:4

For he is the minister of God to thee for good

He is a minister of God’s appointing and commissioning, that acts under him, and for him, is a kind of a vicegerent of his, and in some, sense represents him; and which is another reason why men ought to be subject to him; and especially since he is appointed for their “good”, natural, moral, civil, and spiritual, as Pareus observes: for natural good, for the protection of men’s natural lives, which otherwise would be in continual danger from wicked men; for moral good, for the restraining of vice, and encouragement of virtue; profaneness abounds exceedingly, as the case is, but what would it do if there were no laws to forbid it, or civil magistrates to put them in execution? for civil good, for the preservation of men’s properties, estates, rights, and liberties, which would be continually invaded, and made a prey of by others; and for spiritual and religious good, as many princes and magistrates have been; a sensible experience of which we have under the present government of these kingdoms, allowing us a liberty to worship God according to our consciences, none making us afraid, and is a reason why we should yield a cheerful subjection to it:

but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid:

of the punishment of such evil threatened by law,

and to be inflicted by the civil magistrate;

for he beareth not the sword in vain.

The “sword” is an emblem of the power of life and death, the civil magistrate is invested with, and includes all sorts of punishment he has a right to inflict; and this power is not lodged in him in vain; he may and ought to make use of it at proper times, and upon proper persons:

for he is the minister of God;

as is said before, he has his mission, commission, power and authority from him; and is

a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil;

he is a defender of the laws, a vindicator of divine justice, an avenger of the wrongs of men; and his business is to inflict proper punishment, which is meant by wrath, upon delinquents.

Romans 13:5

Wherefore ye must needs be subject

To the higher powers, to the civil magistrates; there is a necessity of it, because magistracy is God’s ordinance, it is for the good of men; and such that oppose it will severely smart for it: but subjection to it from Christians should be,

not only for wrath;

through fear of punishment, and for the sake of escaping it; either the wrath of men or of God, in this or the other world:

but also for conscience sake:

to keep conscience clear, to exercise a good one void of offence towards God and men; for natural reason, conscience itself, dictates that there ought to be such order among men, that civil government should take place, and ought to be submitted to.

Romans 13:6

For, for this cause pay you tribute also

To show that we are subject to the higher powers, and as a proof and evidence of our subjection to them, we do and ought to pay tribute to them, to support them in their office and dignity; and this is done not for fear of trouble, of distress on goods and estate, or imprisonment of person, but for conscience sake: payment of taxes is not a mere matter of prudence, and done to avoid dangerous consequence, but is and ought to be a case of conscience; whatever is anyone’s due, and

of right belongs to him, conscience dictates it ought to be paid him; as therefore it tells a man, that whatever is God’s should be rendered to him, so whatever is Caesar’s, should be given him; and indeed to do otherwise, to refuse to pay tribute, or by any fraudulent means to deprive the civil magistrate of his due, is not only to do an injury to him, but to the whole body politic, which has a greater concern therein than he himself; and such a person forfeits all right and claim to his protection:

for they are God’s ministers.

This is another reason why tribute should be paid them, not only to testify subjection to them, and keep conscience clear, but because they are called unto, and put into this high office by God; for promotion to such honour and high places comes not from east, west, north, or south; but is by the providence of God, who puts down, and sets up at pleasure; they are his vicegerents, they act under him, are in his stead, and represent his majesty; and therefore, in some sort, what is done to them is done to him:

attending continually upon this very thing;

not of laying, collecting, and receiving tribute, but of service and ministry under God, for the welfare of their subjects; for rightly to administer the office of magistracy requires great pains, care, diligence, and assiduity; and as great wisdom and thoughtfulness in making laws for the good of the body, so a diligent constant concern to put them in execution, to secure the lives of subjects from cut throats and murderers, and their properties and estates from thieves and robbers; and they are not only obliged diligently to attend to such service at home, but to keep a good lookout abroad, and penetrate into, and watch the designs of foreign enemies, to defend from their invasions, and fight for their country; that the inhabitants thereof may live peaceable and quiet lives, enjoying their respective rights and privileges; and since therefore civil government is a business of so much care, and since our rulers are so solicitous, and constantly concerned for our good, and which cannot be done without great expense, as well as diligence, we ought cheerfully to pay tribute to them.

Romans 13:7

Render therefore to all their dues

To all princes, magistrates, and officers, that are placed over us, from the supreme governor to the lowest officer under him, should we render as a due debt, and

not as a mere gift, whatever belongs to them, or is proper for them for the due discharge of their office, to encourage in it, and support the dignity of it, whether external or internal:

tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom.

These two words include all sorts of levies, taxes, subsidies and the former may particularly design what is laid on men's persons and estates, as poll money, land tax and the latter, what arises from the exportation and importation of goods, to and from foreign parts:

fear to whom fear;

not of punishment; for a good subject has no reason to fear the civil magistrate in this sense, only the man that does evil, the malefactor; as for the good neighbour, citizen, and subject, he loves the magistrate the more, the more diligent he is in putting the laws in execution against wicked men; but this is to be understood of a fear of offending, and especially of a reverence bore in the mind, and expressed by outward actions, and such as has going with it a cheerful obedience to all lawful commands:

honour to whom honour;

there is an honour due to all men, according to their respective rank and station, and the relation they stand in to each other; so servants are to honour their masters, children their parents, wives their husbands, and subjects their princes; all inferior magistrates are to be honoured in their place, and more especially the king as supreme, in thought, word, and gesture; see (1 Peter 2:17).

Romans 13:8

Owe no man anything

From the payment of dues to magistrates the apostle proceeds to a general exhortation to discharge all sorts of debts; as not to owe the civil magistrate any thing, but render to him his dues, so to owe nothing to any other man, but make good all obligations whatever, as of a civil, so of a natural kind. There are debts arising from the natural and civil relations subsisting among men, which should be discharged; as of the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband; parents to their children, children to their parents; masters to their servants, servants to their masters; one brother, friend, and neighbour, to another. Moreover, pecuniary debts may be here intended, such as are come into by borrowing,

buying, commerce, and contracts; which though they cannot be avoided in carrying on worldly business, yet men ought to make conscience of paying them as soon as they are able: many an honest man may be in debt, and by one providence or another be disabled from payment, which is a grief of mind to him; but for men industriously to run into debt, and take no care to pay, but live upon the property and substance of others, is scandalous to them as men, and greatly unbecoming professors of religion, and brings great reproach upon the Gospel of Christ.

But to love one another.

This is the only debt never to be wholly discharged; for though it should be always paying, yet ought always to be looked upon as owing. Saints ought to love one another as such; to this they are obliged by the new commandment of Christ, by the love of God, and Christ unto them, by the relations they stand in to one another, as the children of God, brethren, and members of the same body; and which is necessary to keep them and the churches of Christ together, it being the bond of perfectness by which they are knit to one another; and for their comfort and honour, as well as to show the truth and reality of their profession. This debt should be always paying; saints should be continually serving one another in love, praying for each other, bearing one another's burdens, forbearing each other, and doing all good offices in things temporal and spiritual that lie in their power, and yet always owing; the obligation to it always remains. Christ's commandment is a new one, always new, and will never be antiquated; his and his Father's love always continue, and the relations believers stand in to each other are ever the same; and therefore love will be always paying, and always owing in heaven to all eternity. But what the apostle seems chiefly to respect, is love to one another as men, love to one another, to the neighbour, as the following verses show. Love is a debt we owe to every man, as a man, being all made of one blood, and in the image of God; so that not only such as are of the same family, live in the same neighbourhood, and belong to the same nation, but even all the individuals of mankind, yea, our very enemies are to share in our love; and as we have an opportunity and ability, are to show it by doing them good.

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law;

that is, not who loves some one particular person, but every other person besides himself, even his neighbour, in the largest sense of the word, including

all mankind, and that as himself; such an one has fulfilled the law, the law of the decalogue; that part of it particularly which relates to the neighbour; the second table of the law, as the next verse shows: though since there is no true love of our neighbour without the love of God, nor no true love of God without the love of our neighbour; and since these two involve each other, and include the whole law, it may be understood of fulfilling every part of it, that is, of doing it; for fulfilling the law means doing it, or acting according to it; and so far as a man loves, so far he fulfils, that is, does it: but this is not, nor can it be done perfectly, which is evident, partly from the impotency of man, who is weak and without strength, yea, dead in sin, and unable to do any thing of himself; and partly from the extensiveness of the law, which reaches to the thoughts and desires of the heart, as well as to words and actions; as also from the imperfection of love, for neither love to God, nor love to one another, either as men or Christians, is perfect; and consequently the fulfilling of the law by it is not perfect: hence this passage yields nothing in favour of the doctrine of justification by works; since the best works are imperfect, even those that spring from love, for love itself is imperfect; and are not done as they are, in a man's own strength, and without the Spirit and grace of God. Christ only has fulfilled the law perfectly, both as to parts and degrees; and to him only should we look for a justifying righteousness.

Romans 13:9

For this, thou shalt not commit adultery

The apostle here reckons up the several laws of the second table, with this view, that it might appear that so far as a man loves his neighbour, whether more near or distantly related, he fulfils the law, or acts according to it. He omits the first of these, the fifth commandment, either because he had urged this before, so far as it may be thought to regard magistrates; or because, according to the division of the Jews, who reckon five commands to each table, this belonged to the first: and he puts the seventh before the sixth, which is of no great moment; the order of things being frequently changed in the Scripture, and which is often done by Jewish writers, in alleging and citing passages of Scripture; and with whom this is a maxim, (אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה), "that there is no first nor last in the law" {c}; that is, it is of no importance which stands first or last in it: it follows,

thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt

not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet;

which are the sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth commands of the decalogue, (Exodus 20:13 Exodus 20:15-17) :

and if there be any other commandment;

of God, respecting the neighbour, either in the decalogue, as there was the fifth, (Exodus 20:12) , or elsewhere, the apostle repeating this by memory:

it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;

see (Leviticus 19:18) ; this is the summary and epitome of them; so Christ reduces the laws of the first table to the head of love to God, and those of the second to the head of love to the neighbour, (Matthew 22:37-39) , as the apostle does here, and in (Galatians 5:14) , and the Apostle James, in (James 2:8) .

FOOTNOTES:

F3 T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. 2.

Romans 13:10

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour

That is, the man that truly loves his neighbour, will contrive no ill against him, nor do any to him; he will not injure his person, nor defile his bed, nor deprive or defraud him of his substance; or do hurt to his character, bear false testimony against him, or covet with an evil covetousness anything that is his; but, on the contrary, will do him all the good he is capable of:

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law:

so far as a man loves his neighbour, he acts agreeably to the law, and the particular precepts of it above mentioned: what the apostle says of love to the neighbour, the Jews frequently say of love to God;

״הַ שֶׁ אֱהַבֵת אֱלֹהִים (they say F4) שֶׁ אֱהַבֵת אֱלֹהִים (מִקִּיּוֹם) , "hath fulfilled the decalogue", both above and below."

And again F5,

״לֹא יֵשׁ עֲבֹדָה כִּי אֱהַבֵת אֱלֹהִים, R. Abba saith it is (atyyrwad allk) , "the sum of the law"; for the ten words of the law (הַבָּא אֶתְכֵלִילֵהוּ) , "are herein comprehended", or "fulfilled":"

and elsewhere F6 they observe,

״כִּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּלוּלָהּ בְּאַהֲבָה) , "the whole law is comprehended", or fulfilled "in love"."

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Zohar in Deut. fol. 111. 3.

F5 Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 1.

F6 Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, praecept. affirm.
3. prope finem.**Romans 13:11****And that knowing the time**

That it is day and not night, the Gospel day, the day of salvation; in which the grace of God shines forth, like the sun in its meridian glory; life and immortality are brought to light, righteousness and salvation are revealed; and so a time not for sloth and sleep, but business; in which the saints should active in the exercise of grace, and discharge, of duty; owing no man anything but the debt of love; and that the dawn of grace, and day of spiritual light had broke in upon their souls, and dispelled the darkness of sin, ignorance and unbelief; that the darkness was past, and the true light shined, and the sun of righteousness was risen on them: all which they full well knew and were conscious of, and therefore should observe,

that now it is high time for us to awake out of sleep;

since sleep is for the night, and not the day; the Alexandrian copy reads, “for you”. This is to be understood, not of the dead sleep of sin, in which unconverted persons are, to be awoke out of which is a work of divine power; but of the carnal security and drowsy frame of spirit which sometimes attend the churches and children of God, the wise as well as the foolish virgins; and lies in grace being dormant in, the soul; in a backwardness to duty, and a slothfulness in the performance of it; in resting in the outward duties of religion; in lukewarmness about the cause of Christ; in an unconcernedness about sins of omission and commission; and in a willingness to continue in such a sluggish frame: all which arise from a body of sin and death, and an over anxious care for the things of the world; from a weariness in spiritual exercises, and an abstinence from spiritual company and ordinances and from outward peace and liberty: such a frame of spirit, when, it prevails and becomes general is of bad consequence to the churches of Christ; the spirit of discerning, care and diligence in receiving members, are in a great measure lost, and so they are filled with hypocrites and heretics; Christ absents himself from

them; leanness of soul is brought upon them; and they are in danger of being surprised with the midnight cry: the methods God takes to awaken his people out of such a sleep are various; sometimes in a more gentle way, by the discoveries his love, which causes the lips of those that are asleep to speak; sometimes by severe reproofs in the ministry of the word; and sometimes by sharp persecutions in providence; and at last it will be done by the midnight cry: the argument, showing the reasonableness of awaking out of sleep, and that it was high time to do so, follows,

for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;

by which is meant, not temporal salvation, or a deliverance from the persecution the saints endured in Judea, from their own countrymen, by the departure of them from Jerusalem, a little before its destruction, by the destruction of that city, and the peaceful times of Vespasian; but a spiritual and eternal salvation: not Christ the author of it, who was come to effect it; nor that itself, as obtained, which was now done, finished, and completed; nor the application of it to their souls, which also had been made; but the consummate enjoyment of it in heaven, the salvation of their souls at death, and both of soul and body at the resurrection; consisting in a freedom from every evil, and in a full possession of all that is good and glorious: this is brought nearer to the saints, to their sight and view, as their faith grows and increases; and they are nearer the enjoyment of that than when they first believed; and which is a strong reason why a sluggish, slothful frame should not be indulged; what, sleep, and heaven so near at hand! just at their Father’s house, ready to enter into the joy of their Lord, into his everlasting kingdom and glory, and yet asleep!

Romans 13:12**The night is far spent**

Not of Jewish darkness, which was gone, and was succeeded by the Gospel day; nor of former ignorance in Gentilism and unregeneracy, for that was past, and the true light shined; much less of security in the latter day, which was not yet come on; rather of persecution and distress for Christ’s sake; but it is best of all to understand it of the present time of life; so it is called by the Jews F7, (hlyll hmwd hzh Mlweh) , “this world is like to the night”: and which, in the best of saints, is attended with imperfection and darkness, errors and mistakes, in principle and practice, in doctrine and conversation;

however, it is far spent, and in a little time will be over:

the day is at hand;

not the Gospel day, for that was already come; nor the day of grace, and spiritual light and comfort to their souls, for that also had taken place; nor the latter day glory, which then was at a distance; rather the approaching day of deliverance from present persecutions; but it is much better to understand it of the everlasting day of glory, which to particular persons was then, and now is at hand; a little while, and the night of darkness, affliction, and disconsolation will be over, and the day of glory will succeed, when there will be no more night, no more darkness, no more doubts, fears, and unbelief; but one continued series of light, joy, and comfort, and an uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; and which is another reason why the saints should not indulge themselves in sleep, but be active, since the halcyon days are at hand, as well as a reason why they should attend to the following exhortations:

let us therefore cast off the works of darkness;

as the apostle had made use of the metaphors of night and day, and of sleep, and awaking out of sleep, and rising in the morning to business, so he continues the same; and here alludes to persons throwing off their bed clothes, and covering of the night, and putting on proper raiment for the day. By “works of darkness” are meant evil works, which are opposite to the light; to God, who is light itself; to Christ, the light of the world; to the word of God, both law and Gospel, which is a light to our paths; to both the light of nature, and the light of grace: and which spring from the darkness of the mind, and are encouraged to by the god of this world, and by his angels, the rulers of the darkness of it; and which are generally done in the dark, and are such as will not bear the light; and, if grace prevent not, will end in outer darkness, in blackness of darkness, reserved by the justice of God, as the punishment of them. “Casting [them] off” expresses a dislike of them, a displicency with them, and an abstinence from them. Some copies read, “the armour of darkness”, which agrees with what follows:

and let us put on the armour of light;

the whole armour of God, the use of which lies in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; particularly good works are designed here, which though they are not the believer’s clothing, his robe of justifying

righteousness, they are both his ornament and his armour; by which he adorns the doctrine of Christ, and defends his own character and principles against the charges find calumnies of then: these being performed aright, spring from the light of grace in a regenerate man, and are such as will bear the light to be seen of men; and are the lights which are to shine before men, that they beholding them, may glorify God; so virtue was by Antisthenes F8, called (anafaireton oplon) , “armour which cannot be taken away”: the allusion is thought to be to the bright and glittering armour of the Romans; the Alexandrian copy reads, “the words of light”.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 24. 4.

F8 Diogen. Laert. l. 6. in Vita Antisthen. & Hesychius de viris illustr. p. 17.

Romans 13:13**Let us walk honestly as in the day**

Being under the day of the Gospel dispensation, and the day of grace having dawned, and the daystar of spiritual light and knowledge being risen in our hearts, and we being exposed to the view of all men in broad daylight, ought not to lie down and sleep, but to arise and be active, and walk decently with the armour of light on us, as becomes the Gospel of Christ; not naked and unclothed, which would expose us and the Gospel to shame and contempt:

not in rioting;

the Syriac and Arabic versions read, “in singing”, or “songs”; meaning lewd ones, sung at riotous feasts and banquets, made not for refreshment, but for pleasure and debauchery, what the Romans F9 call “comessations”; feasts after supper in the night season, and design all sorts of nocturnal revels: “Comus”, the word here used, is with the Heathens the god of feasts, perhaps the same with “Chemosh”, the god of the Moabites, (1 Kings 11:33).

And drunkenness;

which always attended such unseasonable and immoderate festivals:

not in chambering;

in unlawful copulations, fornication, adultery, and all the defilements of the bed:

and wantonness;

lasciviousness, unnatural lusts, as sodomy

not in strife and envying;
contention and quarrels, which are usually the consequences of luxury and uncleanness.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 Seutonium in Vita Vitell. c. 13.

Romans 13:14

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ

As a man puts on his clothes when he rises in the morning: the righteousness of Christ is compared to a garment, it is the best robe, it is fine linen, clean and white, and change of raiment; which being put on by the Father's gracious act of imputation, covers the sins and deformities of his people, defends them from divine justice, secures them from wrath to come, and renders them beautiful and acceptable in his sight: which righteousness being revealed from faith to faith, is received by faith, and made use of as a proper dress to appear in before God; and may be daily said to be put on by the believer, as often as he makes use of it, and pleads it with God as his justifying righteousness, which should be continually: moreover, to put on Christ, and which indeed seems to be the true sense of the phrase here, is not only to exercise faith on him as the Lord our righteousness, and to make a profession of his name, but to imitate him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; to walk as he walked, and as we have him for an example, in love, meekness, patience, humility, and holiness:

and make not provision for the flesh;

the body: not but that due care is to be taken of it, both for food and clothing; and for its health, and the continuance and preservation of it by all lawful methods; but not so as

to fulfil the lusts thereof;

to indulge and gratify them, by luxury and uncleanness: it is a saying of Hillel F11, (בשר מרבה רמה, (מרבה "he that increases flesh, increases worms"; the sense his commentators F12 give of it is, that

“he that increases by eating and drinking, until he becomes fat and fleshy, increases for himself worms in the grave.”

the design of the sentence is, that voluptuous men, who care for nothing else but the flesh, should consider, that ere long they will be a repast for worms: we should not provide, or be caterers for the flesh; and, by

pampering it, stir up and satisfy its corrupt inclinations and desires.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 7.

F12 Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 7. Vid. Fagium in ib.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 14

The apostle, having finished his exhortations to duties of a moral and civil kind, proceeds to the consideration of things indifferent, about eating some sorts of meats, and keeping days; to which he might be led by the last clause of the preceding chapter, lest that should be interpreted as referring to those who used their Christian liberty in eating every sort of food; in the use of which it was requisite to exercise that love which is the fulfilling of the law, he had so much pressed and recommended in the foregoing chapters. The church at Rome consisted both of Jews and Gentiles: and the former, though they believed in Christ, were not clear about the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and thought they ought still to observe the distinction of meats and days, which were made in it; the latter looked upon themselves under no manner of obligation to regard them; and even among the Jews, some might have greater light and knowledge in these things than others, and used their Christian liberty, when others could not; and this occasioned great animosities and contentions among them; and some on account of these things were called strong, and others weak: and the chief view of the apostle in this chapter, is to give advice to each party how to behave one towards another; how the strong should behave to the weak, and the weak to the strong: and he begins with the strong, and in general exhorts them to a kind, tender, and affectionate regard to their weaker brethren, and not to perplex their minds with disputations about things to little profit, Ro 14:1, then

adistribution of the members of this church into two parts is made, Ro 14:2, showing the reason of the above exhortations; the one sort being strong believers, the others weak, the one eating all things, the other herbs; when some advice is given to each, that the strong should not despise the weak, nor the weak judge the strong; for which reasons are given: and the first is taken from the common interest they both have in the affection of God, and in divine adoption, Ro 14:3, And another is taken from the relation which believers stand in to God, as servants; and therefore not to be judged and condemned, but to be left to their Lord and master, which is illustrated by a simile of such a relation among men, Ro 14:4, and then another instance of different sentiments about Jewish rites and ceremonies is given, Ro 14:5, respecting the observation of days, in which also the members of the church were divided, some observing them, and some not; and the apostle's advice is, that every man should act as he was persuaded in his own mind, and not be uneasy with another: the reason for which he gives, Ro 14:6, because the end proposed by the one, and the other, is the honour and glory of God, and which is the same in the man that eats, or does not eat meat, since both give thanks to God. And this is further confirmed from the general end of the Christian's life and death likewise, which is not to himself, but to the Lord, Ro 14:7,8, from whence it is concluded, that they are the Lord's in life and death, and all their actions are devoted to him; who by dying, rising, and living again, appears to be the Lord of quick and dead, and will judge both, Ro 14:9, and therefore to his judgment things should be left, and one should not condemn or despise another, since all must stand at his bar, Ro 14:10, which is proved Ro 14:11, from a passage in Isa 45:23, from all which it is concluded, Ro 14:12, that an account must be given by everyone to God, at

the general judgment; wherefore it is right and best, not to judge and condemn one another, but to judge this to be the most reasonable and agreeable to Christian charity, that care be taken not to offend, or cause a brother to stumble, Ro 14:13, and whereas it might be objected, that nothing was impure in itself, and therefore might be lawfully eaten, which the apostle allows, and as for himself, was fully persuaded of, yet it was impure to them who thought it so, Ro 14:14, and therefore should not eat; nor should others, when it gave offence to such persons; and which is dissuaded from, because to eat to the grief of the brethren, is contrary to Christian charity; and because it destroys the peace of such persons, and they are such whom Christ has died for, Ro 14:15, besides, hereby reproach might be brought upon them, the Gospel they professed, and the truth of Christian liberty they used, Ro 14:16, and moreover, the kingdom of God did not lie in the use of these things, but in spiritual ones, Ro 14:17, and which should be chiefly regarded, since the service of God in them, is what is grateful to him, and approved by all good men, Ro 14:18, wherefore the things which make for peace and edification should be followed after, things much preferable to meats and drinks, Ro 14:19, for the sake of which the peace of a brother, which is the work of God, should not be destroyed, Ro 14:20, for though all things are pure in themselves, and lawful to be eaten, yet it is an evil to eat them to the offence of another, and for another to eat them against his conscience, which he may be drawn into by the example of others; wherefore it is best to abstain from eating flesh or drinking wine, and everything else that is stumbling and offensive to a weak brother, Ro 14:21, and whereas the strong brother might object and say, I have faith in this matter, I believe it is lawful for me to eat anything, and why should I not? the apostle answers, by granting that he

had faith, but then he observes, he ought to keep it to himself, and not disturb his weak brother, by putting it into practice openly; but should keep it to himself, it being his happiness not to condemn himself by using his liberty with offence, Ro 14:22, and then some advice is given to the weak brother, not to eat with a doubting conscience, Ro 14:23, because in so doing, he would be self-condemned, and because it would not be of faith, and therefore sinful. was sent to the Roman saints, both Jews and Gentiles, inhabiting the city of Rome; of which city and church; by whom the Gospel was first preached at Rome, and who were the means of forming the church there. Certain it is, that the Apostle Paul had not been at Rome when he wrote this epistle, at least it seems very probable he had not, by several expressions in Ro 1:10-15; and yet here was a church to which he writes, and had been a considerable time; for their faith was spoken of throughout the world, Ro 1:8; and when the apostle was on the road to this city, the brethren in it met him, Ac 28:15. The chief design of this epistle is to set in a clear light the doctrine of justification: showing against the Gentiles, that it is not by the light of nature, and works done in obedience to that, and against the Jews, that it was not by the law of Moses, and the deeds of that; which he clearly evinces, by observing the sinful and wretched estate both of Jews and Gentiles: but that it is by the righteousness of Christ imputed through the grace of God, and received by faith; the effects of which are peace and joy in the soul, and holiness in the life and conversation: he gives an account of the justified ones, as that they are not without sin, which he illustrates by his own experience and case; and yet are possessed of various privileges, as freedom from condemnation, the blessing of adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; he treats in it concerning predestination, the calling of

the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; and exhorts to the various duties incumbent on the saints, with respect to one another, and to the world, to duties of a moral and civil nature, and the use of things indifferent; and closes it with the salutations of divers persons.

ROMANS CHAPTER 14

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another*: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or* die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or* why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord*, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably*. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby* thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

COMMENTARY ROMANS 14

Romans 14:1

Him that is weak in the faith

This address is made to the stronger and more knowing Christians among the Romans, how to behave towards those that were inferior in light and knowledge to them, with regard to things of a ritual and ceremonial kind: and by "him that is weak in the faith", is meant, either one that is weak in the exercise of the grace of faith, who has but a glimmering sight of Christ; who comes to him in a very feeble and trembling manner; who believes his ability to save him, but hesitates about his willingness; who casts himself with a peradventure on him; and who is attended with many misgivings of heart, faintings of spirit, and fluctuation of mind, about his interest in him: or one that is weak in the doctrine of faith; has but little light and knowledge in the truths of the Gospel; is a child in understanding; has more affection than judgment; very little able to distinguish truth from error; cannot digest the greater and more sublime doctrines of grace; stands in need of milk, and cannot bear strong meat; is very fluctuating and unsettled in his principles, and like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine: or rather one that is weak in his knowledge of that branch of the doctrine

of faith, which concerns Christian liberty; and that part of it particularly, which respects freedom from the ceremonial law: it designs one, and chiefly a Jew, who though a believer in Christ, and an embracer of the other truths of the Gospel, yet had but very little knowledge of Gospel liberty; but though that believers were to observe all the rituals of the Mosaic dispensation, not knowing that they were abolished by Christ. The phrase is Jewish; it is F13 said,

``what is the meaning of the phrase, in Rephidim, (Exodus 17:1) it signifies such as are of weak hands; as if it had been said, because the Israelites were באמונתם רפיים, "weak in their faith"''

The advice the apostle gives, in reference to such a person, is to

receive

him; not only into their affections, and love him equally, being a believer in Christ, as one of the same sentiments with them, only in this matter, but also into church fellowship with them. The Syriac version reads it, (adya hyl wbh) , "give him the hand": in token of communion, a form used in admission of members. The Gentiles were apt to boast against, and look with some contempt upon the Jews, and were ready to object to their communion, because of their want of light and knowledge in these matters; but this was no bar of communion, nor ought a person to be rejected on account of his weakness, either in the grace, or in the doctrine of faith, when it appears he has the true grace of God; and much less on account of his weakness in that branch of it, concerning Christian liberty; for since Christ does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, nor despise the day of small things, churches should not: it may also intend a receiving of such into intimate conversation, at their private meetings and conferences; taking particular notice of them; giving them proper instructions; praying with them and for them; endeavouring to build them up in their most holy faith, and to bring them into the knowledge of those things they are weak in; bearing their weaknesses patiently, and bearing with them in great tenderness: thus such should be received,

but not to doubtful disputations;

to vain jangling and perverse disputings, such as will rather perplex than inform them; and will leave their minds doubtful and in suspense, and do them

more harm than good.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 1.

Romans 14:2

For one believeth that he may eat all things

He is fully persuaded in his mind, that there is nothing in itself common, or unclean; that the difference between clean and unclean meats, commanded to be observed by the law of Moses, is taken away; and that he may now lawfully eat any sort of food; every creature of God being good, and none to be refused, because of the ceremonial law which is abrogated, provided it, be received with thanksgiving, and used to the glory of God:

another who is weak eateth herbs;

meaning not one that is sickly and unhealthful, and of a weak constitution, and therefore eats herbs for health's sake; but one that is weak in the faith, and who thinks that the laws concerning the observance of meats and drinks are still in force; and therefore, rather than break any of them, and that he may be sure he does not, will eat nothing but herbs, which are not any of them forbidden by the law: and this he did, either as choosing rather to live altogether on herbs, than to eat anything which the law forbids; or being of opinion with the Essenes among the Jews, and the Pythagoreans among the Gentiles, who thought they were to abstain from eating of all sorts of animals.

Romans 14:3

Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not

Such who had a greater degree of Gospel light and knowledge, and made use of their Christian liberty in eating any sort of food, were not to despise as they were apt to do, such as abstained therefrom on account of the ceremonial law, as weak, ignorant; superstitious, and bigoted persons; or were not to set them at naught, or make nothing of them, as the word signifies, have no regard to their peace and comfort; but, on the other hand, were to consider them as brethren in Christ, though weak; and as having a work of God upon their souls, and therefore to be careful how they grieved them, destroyed their peace, or laid stumblingblocks in their way:

and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth:

such who thought it not their duty to eat anything, but to forbear the use of some things directed to in the law, were not to censure and condemn, as they were apt to do, those who used their liberty in these things, as profane persons, and transgressors of the law of God; but leave them to the last and righteous judgment, when every one must be accountable to God for the various actions of life: the reason used to enforce this advice on both parties is,

for God hath received him:

which respects both him that eateth, and him that eateth not, him that is despised, and him that is judged; and is a reason why one should not despise, nor the other judge, because God had received both the one and the other into his heart's love and affection, into the covenant of grace, and into his family by adoption: they were received by Christ, coming to him as perishing sinners, according to the will of God; whose will it likewise was, that they should be received into church fellowship, as being no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and God had also received them into his service, and they were made willing to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and did serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and holiness; and this is the rather to be taken into the sense of this passage, because of what follows.

Romans 14:4

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant

This is another reason, dissuading from censoriousness and rash judgment, taken from civil things; one man has nothing to do with another man's servant; he has no power over him, nor any right to call him to an account for his actions; nor has he any business to censure or condemn him for them, or concern himself about them: so the believer supposed to be judged, does not belong to him that takes upon him to judge and condemn him; he is another's servant, he is the servant of God: he is chosen by God the Father for his service, as well as unto salvation; he is bought with the price of Christ's blood, and therefore not his own, nor another's, but Christ's, he is bought with his money; and he is also born in his house, the church; the Spirit of God in regeneration forms him for himself, for righteousness and holiness; under the influence of whose grace he voluntarily gives up himself to the service of God, and is assisted by him to keep his statutes

and do them; and what has another to do with him? what power has he over him, or right to judge him?

to his own master he standeth or falleth,

the meaning of which is, either if he "stands"; that is, if he serves his Lord and master, of which "standing" is expressive; and continues in the service of him, whose servant he professes to be; this is to his master's advantage and profit, and not to another's: and if he "falls", that is, from his obedience to him, as such who profess to be the servants of God may; they may fall off from the doctrine of grace they have embraced; and that either totally and finally, as such do who never felt the power of it in their hearts; or partially, from some degree of steadfastness in the faith: and such also may fall from a lively exercise of the graces of faith, hope, and love, and into great sins, which is to their master's dishonour, and cause his ways and truths to be evil spoken of; and so it is to their own master they fail: or else the sense is, to their own master they are accountable, whether they stand or fall, serve or disobey him; and it is according to his judgment and not another's, that they "stand", or are and will be justified and acquitted, and will hear, well done, good and faithful servant; and according to the same they will "fall", or be condemned, and hear, take the slothful and unprofitable servant, and cast him into outer darkness: so the words "standing" and "failing" are used by the Jews in a forensic sense, for carrying or losing a cause, for justification or condemnation in a court of judicature, and particularly in the last judgment: and so they explain (Psalms 1:5) , "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment": the Targum paraphrases it,

''the wicked shall not be justified in the great day;" and Jarchi upon the place says, there shall be הקמת רגל סו , "standing of the foot" of the wicked, in the day of judgment; see (Luke 21:36) (1 John 2:28) .

Yea, ye shall be holden up;

which words seem to be a sort of correction of the apostle's, as if he should say, why do I talk of falling, one that is a true servant of the Lord's shall not fall, at least not totally and finally, nor in the last judgment; for he is holden by the right hand of God, by the right hand of his righteousness, and is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation:

for God is able to make him stand;

and will make him stand: words of power oftentimes

include willingness as well as ability; see (Judges 5:24) . God will make such to persevere to the end, because he has loved them with an everlasting love, chosen them in Christ, made a covenant with them in him, and has put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge; Christ has redeemed them by his blood, now intercedes, and is making preparations for them in heaven; they are united to him, and are built on him, the sure foundation; and the Spirit of God has begun that good work, which shall be performed. God will make such to stand in judgment with intrepidity, and without shame, being clothed with the righteousness of his Son; and shall therefore have the crown of righteousness given them, and an abundant entrance administered into his kingdom and glory: hence they ought not to be judged by man's judgment, nor need they regard it. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the Lord is able"

Romans 14:5

One man esteemeth one day above another

This is another instance of the difference of sentiments in this church, about the observation of rituals; and is not to be understood of days appointed by the Christian churches for fasting, or abstinence from certain meats, either once a year, as the "Quadragesima", or Lent; or twice a week, as Wednesdays and Fridays; for these are things of much later observation, and which had never been introduced into the church of Rome in the apostle's time; nor were there any disputes about them: much less of days of Heathenish observation, as lucky or unlucky, or festivals in honour of their gods; for the apostle would never say, that a man who regarded such a day, regarded it to the Lord; nor would have advised to a coalition and Christian conversation with such a man, but rather to exclude him from all society and communion: it remains, therefore, that it must be understood of Jewish days, or of such as were appointed to be observed by the Jews under the former dispensation, and which some thought were still to be regarded; wherefore they esteemed some days in the year above others, as the days of unleavened bread, or the passover; particularly the first night, which was a night to be observed throughout their generations; and in their service for it to this day, use these words, (twlylh lkm hzh) (hlylh hntvn hm) , "how different is this night from every other night" F14? and the feast of tabernacles, especially the last and great day of the feast, and the day of Pentecost; also one day in a month above

others, the first day of the month, or new moon; and one day in a week, the seventh day sabbath: now there were some, who thought that the laws respecting these days were still in force, particularly the latter, and therefore esteemed it above another: but let it be observed, that the man that did so was one that was weak in faith; the same man that ate herbs, because he would not be guilty of violating those laws, which ordered a distinction of meats to be observed, the same weak man esteemed one day above another, imagining the laws concerning the distinction of days were still obligatory, not rightly understanding the doctrine of Christian liberty, or freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law:

another esteemeth every day alike;

that is, one that is strong in faith, and has a greater degree of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of evangelical liberty, knows that the distinction of days, as well as of meats, is taken away, since the word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, Christ the passover is sacrificed for us, the firstfruits of the Spirit have been received, and light by the church from the sun of righteousness, and Christ the true sabbath and rest is come; and therefore, being firmly persuaded there is no more holiness in days than there is in places, has the same regard for one day as another. The difference between these two lay here, the weak brother regarded a day for the sake of a day, as having by a positive law, he supposed to be in force, a superiority to another, and he regarded worship for the sake of this day; the stronger brother, though he also observed a day for divine worship, which is the Lord's day, since there must be some time for it as well as place, yet he observed the day for the sake of worship, and not worship for the sake of the day:

let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;

this is the advice the apostle gives to both parties; his sense is, that he would have each of them fully enjoy their own principle and practice undisturbed; he would have the weak brother, that esteemed one day above another, indulged in his way, since it arose from weakness, until he had better light, nor should he be despised for his weakness; he would have the stronger Christian also peaceably enjoy his sentiment, and pursue what he believed to be right; nor should he be judged, censured, and condemned, as a profane person, and a transgressor of the law: his counsel is, that they would sit down and carefully examine the word of God, and act according to the best light they should receive

from thence; and take care especially, that they did not act contrary to their own consciences, with doubt and hesitation; they ought to be thoroughly satisfied in their own minds, and being so, should content themselves with their different sentiments and practices, without despising or censuring one another.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 5.

Romans 14:6

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord

The apostle strengthens the above advice with this reason, because what is done both by one and the other, is done unto the Lord. The weak brother that esteems one day above another, and regards the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, a new moon, or a seventh day sabbath, does it in obedience to the commands of the Lord, which he thinks are still binding, not knowing that they are disannulled by Christ; and the worship performed by him on any of those days is done in the name and strength of the Lord, with a view to his glory, and as believing it was pleasing in his sight; and whether he is right or wrong, it is to the Lord he does it, and to his own master he stands or falls. The following clause is omitted in the Alexandrian copy and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, but is in most Greek copies, and retained in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

And he that regardeth not the day, the Lord he doth not regard it;

believing it is the will of the Lord, that all distinction of days should cease; and that the law of commandments contained in ordinances, respecting such Jewish days, is abolished by the Lord Jesus Christ; and that it is to the honour the Lord not to observe them: for to regard the days of the feast of tabernacles, is tacitly to say, that the Word has not tabernacled among us; and to observe he days of the passover, is virtually to deny that our passover is sacrificed for us; and to keep the day of Pentecost, is all one as to affirm, that the firstfruits of the Spirit have not been given; and to regard a new moon, is in effect to say, that the church has not received evangelical light from Christ, the sun of righteousness; and to keep a seventh day sabbath, is a strong insinuation, as if Christ the true sabbath, in whom we have our spiritual and eternal rest, is not come; however, it is to the Lord that the stronger brother and more confirmed believer disregards any of those days; and it is to his own master he stands or falls,

nor is he to be judged of man's judgment: and the same is the case of the eater, or non-eater of meats forbidden by the law:

he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks.

The man that is strong in faith, and is fully persuaded by the Lord Jesus that all distinction of meats, as of days, is ceased, eats any thing, and every sort of food, that comes in his way, without making any difference; and when he eats or drinks at any time, it is all to the glory of God; which is a clear case, by his giving God thanks, as becomes him, for the food he eats: he acknowledges that these are the creatures of God, and his gifts to him; he gives him thanks for the right he has given him to eat of them, and for taking away the distinction of meats, and giving him the free use of his creatures; and the more thankful he is when he considers how unworthy he is of the least of these mercies: and

he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth, or, and giveth God thanks.

The man that is weak in faith, that eateth not food forbidden by the law, abstains from such food, purely on account of the Lord, in obedience to his will, and with a view to his glory, supposing such a law to be in full force; and is thankful to God for the herbs he allows him to eat, or for other food not forbidden by the law: and therefore since each party shows such a religious concern for the glory of the Lord, the apostle argues they ought to be easy one with another. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and giveth the Lord thanks".

Romans 14:7

For none of us liveth to himself

That is, none of us believers; others may, but these do not, at least they ought not, nor do they when under the influence of the grace of God: they do not live, neither to righteous, nor to sinful self; they do not live upon their duties and services; nor do they ascribe their life, righteousness, and salvation to them; nor do they live to their own lusts, or make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, and much less to the lusts and wills of others:

and no man dieth to himself;

every man dies, and must, or undergo a change equivalent to death; believers die as well as others, not eternally, or the second death, but corporeally,

or a temporal death, but not to themselves; as they do not seek their own will and pleasure, and profit in life, so neither in death; they do not die to their own advantage only; death is gain unto them, it frees them from all their sorrows, toil, and labours, and introduces them into the presence of Christ, and the enjoyment of everlasting happiness; but this is not all their death issues in, but also in the glory of Christ: moreover, no man has the power over life or death; as his life is not from himself, he has no power to lengthen or shorten it, nor to hinder or hasten death; this belongs to another Lord and master, whom life and death are both to subserve. This is an illustration of the above reason, by which the apostle confirms his advice.

Romans 14:8

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord

As natural, so spiritual life is derived from the Lord, and believers live by faith upon him, and according to his will revealed in the word; find to his honour and glory; at least they desire so to do:

and whether we die, we die unto the Lord;

resigning up life unto him, whenever it is his pleasure; magnifying of him, as by life, so by death; dying to be with him, to be raised again by him, and live with him for evermore; in the faith and hope of this, the believer both lives and dies, and so glorifies Christ both in life and death: hence this conclusion follows,

whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's;

by the gift of the Father to him, by his own purchase, and the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themselves to him: and hence it is, that under a sense of this, that they are his, and not their own, nor another's, they do all they do for his glory; whether they observe, or not observe a day, it is to the Lord; whether they eat, or not eat things formerly forbidden, it is to him; and whether they live or die, it is to the Lord, whose they are: and hence also it is, that they are not to be despised and set at nought, or to be judged and censured by one another, since they belong to another master, who is their Lord, and will be their Judge.

Romans 14:9

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived,

&c.] This last word "revived" is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, but very naturally placed by the Syriac, between Christ's dying and rising. The Alexandrian

copy reads, “died and lived”: and the Ethiopic version, “died and revived”: the end of all which was,

that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living;

that is, of believers, whether dead or alive; for though he is Lord of all, as God and Creator, yet his appearing to be Lord by his dying, rising, and living again, can only have respect to them, for whom dying he has abolished death, and destroyed Satan; whom he has redeemed from sin, and delivered from this present evil world; and so having freed them from those other lords which had the dominion over them, shows himself to be their one and only Lord: and by rising again from the dead, ascending to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God, all creatures and things being subject to him, he is made or declared both Lord and Christ; and living again, and continuing to live for ever, he appears to have the keys of hell and death; and will open the graves, and raise from thence, and judge both quick and dead, those that will be found alive at his coming, and such as he will cause to rise from the dead then; till which time, the apostle suggests, the decision of these differences about meats and days was to be left; and in the mean time the saints were to cultivate peace and love among themselves.

Romans 14:10

But why dost thou judge thy brother?

&c.] These words are spoken to the man weak in faith, that scrupled eating of certain meats, and chose rather eat none, and live on herbs, and who esteemed one day above another; and was very apt to censure and condemn such as made use of their Christian liberty in these things, though they were brethren, not in a natural or civil, but in a spiritual relation:

or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?

these words, on the other hand, are directed to the stronger believer, who believed he might eat all things, and esteemed every day alike; being fully persuaded, that the distinction of meats and of days was now ceased; and such were apt to be puffed up with their superior knowledge and faith, and were ready to treat with an air of contempt those that were weak; showing little or no regard to their peace and edification, though they stood in the same relation to each other. The emphasis lies upon the word “brother”, in both branches of the expostulation; and the force of the apostle’s reasoning

is that they should not judge or despise one another, because they were brethren, stood in the same relation to God and Christ, belonged to the same family, were partakers of the same grace, and had no pre-eminence one over another; they had but one master, and all they were brethren: and which he further enforces with the following reason or argument,

for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ;

at the last day, when he shall sit on his throne of glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, and he shall pronounce and execute the decisive sentence on each of them: there is a particular, and a general judgment; a particular judgment at death, when the soul is immediately consigned to bliss or woe; and a general one in the end of time; which may be proved both from reason, as from the relation creatures stand in to God, from the inequality of things in this life, and the conscious fears of men with respect to a future one; and from divine revelation, Christ will be the Judge, he is so appointed by his Father, and is every way fit for it, being God omniscient and omnipotent; and when he shall appear in his glory, he shall sit on his judgment seat, the dead will be raised, the books will be opened, and all shall be summoned to appear before him, of every age and sex, of every rank and degree, and of every character, good or bad: here the saints are particularly designed, “we shall all stand”; whether ministers or private Christians, weak or strong believers; they that are apt to judge, and others that are too ready to despise; they shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ, who is sole Judge, and shall render to every man according to his works, and from whom they shall all receive their sentence. The allusion is to human courts of judicature, in which the judge sits upon a bench, and they that are tried stand before him; see (2 Corinthians 5:10) . The Alexandrian copy reads, “the judgment seat of God”.

Romans 14:11

For it is written

In (Isaiah 45:23) ; though Justin Martyr F15 cites a like passage with what follows, as out of Ezekiel 37, but no such words appear there, either in the Hebrew text, or Septuagint version:

as I live, saith the Lord;

the form of an oath used often by the Lord; who because he could swear by no greater, he swore by

himself, by his own life; signifying, that what he was about to say, would as surely come to pass, as that he lived; and in the original text in Isaiah it is, “I have sworn by myself”; which being generally expressed, the apostle, perfectly agreeable to the meaning of it, gives the particular form of oath he swore, as in (Isaiah 49:18) ;

every knee shall bow to me;

which is not to be understood literally of bowing of the knee at the name of Jesus, which has no foundation in this, nor in any other passage of Scripture, but figuratively, of the subjection of all creatures to Christ, both voluntary and involuntary. The Complutensian edition adds, “of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth”, as in (Philippians 2:10) , from whence these words seem to be taken:

and every tongue shall confess to God;

that is, everyone that has a tongue, every man, be he who he will, a good or a bad man, shall own at the last day, that Christ is God and Lord of all; see (Philippians 2:10 Philippians 2:11) . It may be asked, how this passage appears to be a proof of what the apostle had asserted, for which purpose it seems to be cited, since here is nothing said of Christ, nor of his judgment seat, nor of all standing before it? to which may be returned, that it is clear from the context in the prophet, that the Messiah is the person speaking, who is said to be a just God and Saviour; and is represented as calling upon, and encouraging all sorts of persons to look to him for salvation; and as he in whom the church expected righteousness and strength, and in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory; and which the Chaldee paraphrase all along interprets of (yyd armym) , “the Word of the Lord”; the essential Word of God, the true Messiah: moreover, the bowing of the knee, and swearing, or confessing, to him, relate to his lordship and dominion over all; and suppose him as sitting on his throne of glory, as Lord of all, or as a judge on his judgment seat, in a court of judicature, where such like actions as here mentioned are performed; and whereas every knee is to bow, and every tongue to confess to him, which include all mankind, it follows then, that all the saints shall stand before him, bow unto him, own him as their Lord, and be judged by him. Kimchi says F16, that this shall be (Mymyh trxab) , “in the last days”: and which the apostle rightly refers to the day of the general judgment. This place affords a considerable proof of Christ’s true and proper deity, being in the

prophet styled “Jehovah”, and by the apostle “God”; and such things being ascribed to him, as swearing by himself, which no creature may do, and the subjection and confession of all creatures to him, whether they will or not.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Apolog. 2. pro Christianis, p. 87.

Romans 14:12

So then everyone of us

this is the conclusion, drawn from the foregoing account of things, that there will be a general judgment, that Christ will be Judge, and all must appear at his bar; from whence it necessarily follows, that every man, and so every Christian, strong or weak, whatever may be his gifts, talents, and abilities,

shall give an account of himself to God;

that is, to Christ, who is God; which is another proof of his deity, for he will be the Judge, the Father will judge no man; it is before his judgment seat all shall stand; and therefore the account must be given to him by every one, of himself, and not another; of all his thoughts, words, and deeds, which will be all brought into judgment; and of his time and talents, how they have been spent and used; and of all his gifts of nature, providence, and grace, how they have been exercised for the glory of God, his own good, and the good of others: the formal manner in which this will be done is unknown unto us; however, this is certain, that the saints will have upon this reckoning, in what sort soever it may be, a full and open discharge, through the blood and righteousness of Christ. The Jews F17, say, in much such language as the apostle does, that

“when a man removes out of this world, then (hyraml anbvwx) (byhy) , “he gives an account to his Lord”, of all that he has done in the world.”

FOOTNOTES:

F17 Zohar in Gen. fol. 49. 3.

Romans 14:13

Let us not therefore judge one another more

With respect to the observance or non-observance of the laws relating to meats and drinks, and days, and times; the apostle means, that they should not judge rashly, nor anything before the time; they should not censure and judge each other’s characters and states, on

account of these things, but leave all to the decisive day, to Christ the Judge, and to his bar, before which all must stand:

but judge this rather;

or reckon this to be the most proper, fit, and advisable:

that no man put a stumblingblock or occasion to fall in his brother's way;

as in the former part of the advice the apostle seems to have respect more especially to the weak brethren, who were ready to judge and condemn such as neglected the observance of the laws about meats and days, as transgressors, and as wicked persons, that ought not to be in the communion of the church; so in this he seems more principally to have regard to the stronger brethren; who, through their imprudent use of their Christian liberty, offended weaker minds, and were the occasion of their stumbling and falling, which it became them to be careful to prevent; and rather than be a means of anything of this nature, it was much better, as he afterwards observes, neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, and entirely drop or forego the use of their liberty.

Romans 14:14

I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus

As for the apostle's own sense and judgment about the distinction of meats, it was this,

that there is nothing unclean of itself;

that every creature, as originally made by God, is good; that what is eatable, or fit for food, may be eaten, whatever the Mosaic laws, being now abrogated, say to the contrary; and that whatever physical or natural difference there may be between the creatures of God, one being naturally fit for food, and another not; yet there is no moral distinction between them, there is nothing in any of them that can morally defile a man by eating them; nor indeed is there now any ceremonial distinction between them, and so no ceremonial pollution by them. This was not a bare conjecture, nor a mere opinion, but a point of certain knowledge, a matter of faith, and of full assurance of faith; the apostle was thoroughly persuaded of the truth of it, and had not the least doubt nor difficulty in his mind about it; he was as fully assured of it, as he was of his salvation by Christ, and of his interest in the love of God, from which he could never be separated, and therefore expresses it in language equally as strong; and this he

came to the knowledge and persuasion of, "by the Lord Jesus"; by his express words, (Matthew 15:11 Matthew 15:17 Matthew 15:18) ; or by a revelation from him, in which way he had the whole Gospel: he might be informed of this matter in like manner as Peter was, by a vision from heaven, (Acts 10:10) , or he knew this through the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law by Christ, who abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, and so these laws relating to the difference of meats among the rest; and he knew, that all the creatures in their original creation were good, and though cursed, for man's sake yet Christ had removed the curse, and sanctified them for the use of his people, who, under the Gospel dispensation, might make use of them at pleasure, without distinction: and the Jews themselves own, that what before was unclean, shall in the days of the Messiah be clean: so they explain (Psalms 146:7) ; "the Lord looseth the prisoners", which they would render, "the Lord looseth that which was forbidden"; and give this as the sense F18

``every beast which was unclean in this world (the Jewish state), (awbl dytel htwa rhjm hb" h) , "God will cleanse it in the time to come" (in the times of the Messiah), when they shall be clean as at the first, to the sons of Noah."

So they observe, that the Hebrew word for a hog, (חזיר) , comes from (חזר) , which signifies to return; because, say they F19, hereafter God will cause it to return to the Israelites; and even now, as formerly, they allow of eating anything that is torn, or dies of itself, or hog's flesh to an army entering into a Gentile country, and subduing it, where they can find nothing else F20:

but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is

unclean;

such a man that thinks the laws concerning clean and unclean meats are still in force, and binding upon him, ought to refrain from eating them; because he would act contrary to his conscience, and so violate and defile it; wherefore though the apostle was so fully satisfied in his own mind, yet he would not have weak and scrupulous consciences do themselves any hurt through his faith; for if they ate doubtingly, and without faith, it was an evil. Capellus F21 mentions a rule laid down by the Jews, but does not direct where it is to be found, nor have I yet met with it, very agreeable to this of the apostle's, which runs thus:

``this is the grand general rule in the law, that every thing which thou dost not know, (אור , אור לייב) (הוא מותר או אור לייב) , "whether it is lawful or unlawful, to thee it is unlawful", until thou hast asked a wise men concerning who may teach thee that it is lawful."

FOOTNOTES:

F18 Bereshit Rabba in Maji Synops. Jud. Theolog. p. 224. R. Moses Hadarsan in Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 11. c. 12. p. 699.

F19 Abarbinel. Rosh Amana, c. 13. fol. 18. 2.

F20 Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 8. sect. 1.

F21 In loc.

Romans 14:15

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat

The apostle proceeds to give reasons why, though he was so fully persuaded that nothing was unclean of itself, and so he, and any other of the same persuasion, might lawfully eat anything; yet they should forbear, and not make use of this liberty; because if a brother should be grieved by it, that is, either should be concerned and troubled at it inwardly, both because the person that eats is thought by him to have transgressed a command of God, and because he himself is not only despised as a weak brother, but as if he was a "judaizing" Christian, and walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel; or else should be emboldened thereby to eat, and so wound and defile his weak conscience; or be so galled and offended at it, as to stumble and fall off from his profession of Christianity, and withdraw his communion, as judging there is nothing in it, no regard being had to the law of God:

now walkest thou not charitably;

this is a breach of the rule of charity or brotherly love; such an one is a brother, and though a weak one, yet he is to be loved as a brother, and to be charitably walked with: true charity, or love, vaunts not itself over, nor is it puffed up against a weak brother; nor is it unconcerned for his peace, but bears with his weaknesses, and forbears the use of things grieving to him:

destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

This is to be understood, not of eternal destruction, that can never be thought to be either in the will or power of any man; such a degree of malice can never

arise in the heart of any, to wish for, desire, or take any step towards the eternal damnation of another; and could any thing of this kind be among the men of the world, yet surely not among brethren of the same faith, and in the same church state; and were there any so wicked as to desire this, yet it is not in their power to compass it, for none can destroy eternally but God; see (Matthew 10:28) ; besides, it is not reasonable to suppose, that eternal damnation should follow upon eating things indifferent, or be caused by an offence either given or taken through them; moreover, though such as only think themselves, or profess themselves, or are only thought by others to be such, for whom Christ died, may be eternally destroyed, yet none of those can, for whom Christ really died; for they are his special people, his peculiar friends, his own sheep, his body the church, which can never perish; and he, by dying, has procured such blessings for them, such as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, and eternal life, which will for ever secure them from destruction: besides, should anyone of them be destroyed, the death of Christ would be so far in vain, nor would it appear to be a sufficient security from condemnation, nor a full satisfaction to the justice of God; or God must be unjust, to punish twice for the same fault: but this is to be understood of the destruction of such a man's peace and comfort, which is signified by grieving, stumbling, offending, and making him weak; and the words are a fresh reason, why they that are strong in the faith of Christian liberty, should nevertheless forbear the use of it, to preserve the peace of a weak brother; which is a matter of importance, and the rather to be attended to, since it is the peace of one that belongs to Christ, whom he has so loved as to die for, and therefore should be the object of the regard and affections of such as believe in Christ and love him.

Romans 14:16

Let not then your good be evil spoken of.

] The Vulgate Latin reads it, "our good", and so the Syriac version; the sense is the same, and to be understood either of the Gospel in general, which is good in its author, matter, effects, and consequences; is good tidings of good things, and which might be blasphemed by the men of the world, on account of the divisions and contentions among the professors of it, about such little trivial things, as eating this or the other sort of food; and therefore care should be taken, that it be not evil

spoken of through such conduct: or else the doctrine of Christian liberty in particular, which is a good thing; Christ has procured it, and bestows it upon his people; it is a valuable blessing in itself, and is attended and followed with many considerable privileges and immunities; but may be evil spoken of by those, who do not so well understand it, through an imprudent use of it by those who do; and who therefore should guard against any reproach that may be cast upon it; and rather than this should be the case, forego the use of it, in things of an indifferent nature; see (1 Corinthians 10:30) ; so that this is another of the apostle's reasons, why though nothing is of itself unclean, yet it should be abstained from on account of others.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink

Neither the kingdom of glory, nor the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in the other world, is attained to by any such things; for neither eating and drinking, nor not eating and drinking, can recommend to the divine favour, or give a meetness for heaven, or a right unto it; see (1 Corinthians 8:8) , nor does the kingdom of grace, the principle of grace, lie in such things, nor in anything that is external; nor does the Gospel, or Gospel church state, which frequently go under this name of the kingdom of God, consist of such things as the ceremonial and the legal dispensation did, but the Gospel and the dispensation of grace are opposed unto them; see (Hebrews 9:10) (13:9) .

But righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The kingdom of glory, which is the kingdom of God, because of his preparing, giving, calling to, and putting into the possession of, is attained unto by righteousness; not the righteousness of men, but the righteousness of Christ imputed by God, and received by faith; and through peace made by the blood of Christ, and rejoicing in him, without having any confidence in the flesh, which is a branch of the Spirit's grace in regeneration. The kingdom of grace, or the governing principle of grace in the soul, and which is of God's implanting there, lies in righteousness and true holiness, in which the new man is created; in truth and uprightness in the inward parts, where the laws of God are put and written; and in peace of conscience, arising from the blood and righteousness of Christ; and in that spiritual joy and comfort the Holy Ghost produces, by

leading to a sight of Christ, and an interest in him and his atonement. The Gospel, which gives an account both of the kingdom of grace and of glory, reveals the righteousness of Christ, and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world: it is a publication of peace by the blood of Christ; it calls men to peace, to cultivate peace one among another, and to seek those things which make for it; and when it comes in power, is attended with joy in the Holy Ghost, and is the means of increasing it; and this is another reason, persuading to Christian forbearance, in the use of things indifferent.

Romans 14:18

For he that in these things serveth Christ

That is, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; he whose faith is an obedient one, and embraces these things, and from the heart obeys them; who seeks righteousness alone by Christ, and peace and pardon through his blood; who rejoices in Christ Jesus, and puts no trust in the flesh, in moral duties or ceremonial services; and who, from principles of grace, serves Christ in a way of righteousness, wherein he possesses true peace of conscience, and abundance of spiritual joy and comfort: the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "in this thing"; as if it referred only to the right use of Christian liberty, about things indifferent: such an one

is acceptable to God;

in Christ the beloved, in whom he believes, from whom he derives all his peace, joy, and comfort; and whom he serves in righteousness and holiness, and through whom also all his services are acceptable unto God:

and approved of men;

of good men, of such that can discern things that differ, and approve those that are excellent; and even of bad men, for such who live honestly and uprightly, who cultivate peace and friendship among men, and carry themselves cheerfully and civilly to all men, cannot but be approved of by the generality of them, though they may dislike them on other accounts.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore follow after the things,

Since the kingdom of God is in part peace, and the man that serves Christ in this, as in other things,

is accepted with God, and grateful to men, the apostle very pertinently exhorts to seek after such things,

which make for peace:

not with God, for, for a sinful creature to make peace with God is impracticable and impossible, nor is there any exhortation to it in all the word of God; and if there was, it would be unnecessary here; since the persons here exhorted were such for whom peace with God was made by Christ, and who had a clear and comfortable sense of it in their own souls; and besides, for any to be put upon, or to attempt to make their peace with God, must highly reflect upon the methods of God's grace, in reconciling sinners to himself; and be injurious to the blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ, by which only peace is made: but the apostle means, either what makes for a man's own peace, or for the peace of others; the things which make for a man's own peace in his own conscience distressed with sin, are looking to, and dealing with the blood of Christ, which speaks peace and pardon; and the righteousness of Christ, which being apprehended by faith, a soul has peace with God through Christ; and also an embracing the Gospel, and the truths of it, which direct to Christ, which publish peace, and are the means of increasing and establishing a solid and well grounded peace, on the free grace of God and merits of Christ: attending on ordinances, and exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men, are means of continuing and promoting a man's peace; he enjoys peace in them, though he do not derive it from them; yea, in the peace of others, is a man's own peace; and this is what is chiefly meant, a pursuing of things which make for the peace of others; of all men, and especially of saints; this is what should be eagerly followed after, closely pursued, and all ways and means should be made use of, to promote and secure it: this is the will of God; it is well pleasing to Christ, and a fruit of the Spirit; it is one part of the Gospel dispensation; church fellowship cannot be profitable and pleasant without it; it suits with the character of saints, who are sons of peace; and agrees with their privileges they enjoy, or have a right unto, as spiritual peace here, and eternal peace hereafter;

and things wherewith one may edify another.

The church is often compared to a building, to a temple, a city, an house, and saints are the materials thereof; who are capable of being edified, or built up, yet more and more, both by words and by deeds; by words, by the ministry of the word, which is set up and

continued among other things, for the edifying of the body of Christ; by praying with, and for each other; and by Christian conversation, about the experience of the grace of God, and doctrines of the Gospel, whereby saints may be useful in building up one another in their most holy faith; and so likewise by avoiding all filthy, frothy, and corrupt communication; all angry words and wrathful expressions, which tend not to profit, and are not for the use of edifying, but the contrary: moreover, edification is promoted by deeds, by acts of charity, or love; for charity edifies not by bare words but by loving in deed and in truth, by serving one another in love; for the spiritual body of Christ his church, makes increase unto the edifying of itself in love; and also by laying aside the use of things indifferent, when disagreeable to any of the brethren; for though all things may be lawful to be done by us, yet all things do not edify the brethren; and things which make for the edification of the body, as well as our own, are diligently to be sought after. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, read, "let us keep"; or "observe those things wherewith one may edify another".

Romans 14:20

For meat destroy not the work of God

The Syriac reads it, "the works of God"; referring either to righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, of which the kingdom of God consists; or to the weak brother, who both as a creature, and as a new creature, is the workmanship of God; and to the good work of grace, the work of faith upon his soul, which is the work of God; or rather to his peace, and the peace of the church of Christ, which is both the will and work of God; peace is what he calls his people to, and what he himself is the author of; and may be destroyed, and sometimes is, by trifling things; whereas a true believer, though ever so weak, cannot be destroyed, nor the good work of God upon his soul be lost, nor any part of it; not the work of faith, which Christ prays for that it fail not, and is both the author and finisher of; but the work of peace and edification in particular persons, and in a church, may be destroyed, but it is pity it should, by so small a matter, so trivial a thing as meat, or the use of anything that is indifferent:

all things indeed are pure.

The Ethiopic version adds, "to the pure"; to them that have pure consciences, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and have no doubt or scruple about eating things

indifferent; but this addition seems to be taken out of (Titus 1:15) ; though it may serve to explain the sense, which is, that all sorts of food, without any distinction, may be eaten; there is nothing common or unclean, every creature in itself is good, and every Christian may lawfully eat thereof, with moderation and thankfulness. This is a concession which stands thus corrected and restrained,

but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

The Arabic version adds, “of his neighbour”; which is a good interpretation of the passage; for the apostle means not with offence to a man’s own conscience, though so to eat is an evil too, but with offence to a fellow Christian; it is not an evil in itself to eat, but when this circumstance of offending another thereby attends it; it is evil, though not in itself, yet in its consequences; it offends a weak brother, displeases Christ, who would not have one of his little ones offended, and brings a woe upon the person by whom the offence comes. The Ethiopic version reads, “who eats inordinately”; which to be sure is sinful, but is not the meaning here.

Romans 14:21

It is good neither to eat flesh

Any sort of flesh, even that which is not forbidden in the law, rather than offend a weak brother; and the apostle determines for himself, that he would not, where there was any danger of doing this, (1 Corinthians 8:13) .

Nor to drink wine;

not only the wine of libations to Heathen deities, but wine in common; which was not prohibited by the law of Moses, but in the case of a Nazarite, and of vows:

nor anything,

be it what it will,

whereby thy brother stumbleth.

The Syriac version reads, “our brother”; anyone that stands in such a spiritual relation to any of us; and for which reason care should be taken, that no stumblingblock, or occasion to fall, should be put in his way; particularly that Christian liberty in things indifferent be not unseasonably and imprudently used, and so become a means of stumbling and staggering to weak minds:

or is offended;

to that degree, as to censure and judge him that eats, as an impious person, and a transgressor of the law; with whom he cannot keep his communion, but withdraws himself from it, and is even tempted to drop his profession of the Christian religion entirely, being ready to think it is not right, since contrary to the law of Moses:

or is made weak;

more weak in the faith than he was before, and his love is weakened and grows very cold and indifferent to his Christian brethren, that can take and use a liberty which he cannot. These two last phrases are not in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, nor in the Alexandrian copy, though in others, and are used for the sake of explanation and amplification.

Romans 14:22

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God

Which is to be understood, not of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the doctrines of the Gospel; for a man that has such faith given him, ought not to keep it in his own breast, but to declare it to others; he ought to make a public visible profession of it, before many witnesses; it becomes him to tell the church of God what great things the Lord has done for him; and as he believes with the heart, so he ought to make confession with the mouth unto salvation; but this faith only designs a full persuasion in a man’s own mind, about the free and lawful use of things indifferent, the subject the apostle is upon; see (Romans 14:5 Romans 14:14) ; and his advice on this head is, to keep this faith and persuasion in a man’s own breast, and not divulge it to others, where there is danger of scandal and offence: he does not advise such to alter their minds, change their sentiments, or cast away their faith, which was right and agreeable to his own, but to have it, hold and keep it, though, within themselves; he would not have them openly declare it, and publicly make use of it, since it might be grieving and distressing to weak minds; but in private, and where there was no danger of giving offence, they might both speak of it, and use it; and if they could not, should satisfy themselves that God, who sees in secret, knows they have this faith, and sees their use of it, though others do not, for from him they have it; so the Ethiopic version reads it, and “if thou hast faith with thyself, thou art secure before God, from whom thou hast obtained it”; and should be thankful to him for it, and use it in such a manner as makes most for

his glory, and the peace of his church since to him they must give an account another day: some copies and versions read without an interrogation, thou hast faith; and others, “thou, the faith which thou hast, have it to thyself” so the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth;

or “approves of”; that is, it is well for that man who observes no difference of meats, if either he does not act contrary to his own conscience, and so condemns himself in what he allows himself in; or exposes himself to the censure, judgment, and condemnation of others, in doing that which he approves of as lawful, and is so, but unlawful when done to the offence of others: some understand this as spoken to the weak believer, signifying that he is in the right, who, through example, and the force of the sensual appetite, is not prevailed upon to allow himself to eat, contrary to his own conscience, and whereby he would be self-condemned; but as the strong believer is addressed in the beginning of the verse, I choose to think he is intended in this part of it; and the rather, because the weak believer is taken notice of in the next verse, with a peculiar view to this very thing.

Romans 14:23

And he that doubteth

Or makes a difference between meats and meats, or is in suspense whether any difference should be observed or not,

is damned;

not with everlasting damnation, which is not the consequent of, nor connected with such an action, as eating of a thing indifferent, with a scrupulous conscience; but such an one is condemned in his own conscience; he is self-condemned, his conscience condemns him for what he himself does; and he is self-condemned in judging and censuring others, for the same things: so the Syriac renders it, (hl byyxta) , “he becomes guilty”, or he contracts guilt to himself, or is self-condemned; and so the Arabic, “he is already condemned”;

because [he eateth] not of faith:

or of a full persuasion in his own mind that he is right in eating; he halts between two opinions, and is doubtful in his own mind what is best to do, and therefore, whilst this is his case, he ought to refrain:

for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

This is a general rule, or axiom, which is not only applicable to the present case, but to any other, whether of a natural, civil, moral, or evangelic kind: “whatsoever does not spring from faith”, as the Arabic version renders it, cannot be excused of sin; whatever is not agreeable to the word and doctrine of faith, ought not to be done; whatever is done without faith, or not in the exercise of it, is culpable, for without faith nothing can be pleasing to God; and whatever is contrary to the persuasion of a man’s own mind, is so far criminal, as it is a violation of his conscience; whatever men do, especially in a religious way, they ought to make faith of it, or to be fully persuaded of it in their own minds, or they act amiss: in the Arabic version, the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, (Romans 16:25-27) , “now to him that is of power” are here added; which have induced some to think, that the apostle intended to have finished his epistle here; but having more time, and other things occurred to write of, he proceeded.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 15

The apostle in this chapter pursues his exhortation to mutual affection and forbearance, notwithstanding their different sentiments about the use of meats, and observation of days; excuses his writing so freely to them, which they might bear with, in consideration of his being an apostle, especially an apostle of the Gentiles, and which office he magnified and fulfilled everywhere; gives them the reasons why he had not as yet been with them though he greatly desired it, encourages them to expect, a visit from him; and concludes with earnestly entreating them that he might have a share in their prayers: and first, as an inference from what he had said in the preceding chapter, he lays it down as a duty incumbent on himself, and all that were strong in the doctrine of Christian liberty, to bear with the infirmities of weak Christians, and not please themselves, but others, Ro 15:1 , which he enforces, from the usefulness of it, it being for the good and edification of others, Ro 15:2 , and from the example of Christ, who pleased not himself, Ro 15:3 , and which is proved from a passage of Scripture in Ps 69:9 , the pertinency of which passage, and the citation and application of it to Christ and the present case, are vindicated from this consideration, that whatever was written in former times, was for the use of the saints under the Gospel dispensation, Ro 15:4 , and that the exhortation might have its effect upon them, be puts up a prayer to God for them, that such

a temper of mind might be in them, which would be for the glory of God, Ro 15:5,6 , and then he repeats his exhortation, Ro 15:7 , that they would affectionately receive one another; which he urges by the example of Christ, who had received them to the glory of God; and that they might glorify him, and this was one way of doing it: and that this argument might have the greater weight with both parties, he observes, that Jesus Christ had a special regard to the Jews, and was their minister, sent unto them to fulfil the promises made unto their fathers, and had received them; and therefore though they were weak, they were not to be despised, grieved, and offended, Ro 15:8 , and as for the Gentiles, it was a clear case that God had had long ago a design of mercy to them, and that they were to be, and were now received by Christ, and so under obligation to glorify God for his mercy; and therefore not to be judged and condemned, though they did not conform to the ceremonial law; and this he proves in Ro 15:9-12 , from several passages of Scripture in Ps 18:49 De 32:43 Ps 117:1 Isa 11:10 , and closes this argument he had so long insisted on with a prayer to God for them, that they might be in the exercise of faith and hope; and, in the exercise of those graces, be filled with joy and peace, Ro 15:13 , and in order to prevent an objection that might be made to these prayers and exhortations of his, that they suggested that they were wicked and ignorant men, devoid of affection, and knew not how to behave to each other, nor to exhort one another, the apostle softens such a resentment, by calling them brethren, and by expressing his persuasion of their abundant goodness, knowledge, and abilities, Ro 15:14 , and excuses the freedom he took with them by observing, that he only acted the part of a monitor, Ro 15:15 , and the rather this freedom might be allowed him, on account of the great gifts bestowed upon him, qualifying him to be an apostle of Christ; and especially as he was an apostle of the Gentiles and so their apostle, Ro 15:16 , and on account of his office, gifts, and usefulness, he had reason to glory; though through Christ only, and in things relating to God, and not himself, Ro 15:17 , when he takes an occasion to enlarge on his ministry, and magnify his office; partly from the end and success of it, bringing the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ, Ro 15:18 , and partly from the means and causes of such success the preaching of the word, working miracles, and the power of the Holy Ghost; and from the extent of it, reaching from Jerusalem to Illyricum, Ro 15:19 , and from the difficulty which attended it, he preaching

in places where the Gospel was never preached before, and which he chose to do, Ro 15:20 , and which was necessary to be done, according to a prophecy in Isa 52:15 , which he cites, Ro 15:21 , and observes, that it was his preaching in these many and distant parts that was the reason of his not having been with the saints at Rome, Ro 15:22 , but now gives them reason to expect his coming; partly because he had finished his travels in those countries, and partly because of the vehement desire he had to see them, Ro 15:23 , and besides, an opportunity seemed to be offering, he intending to take a journey to Spain, when it would lie in his way to come to Rome, and be for his advantage, Ro 15:24 , in the mean while he informs them what he was engaged in, to carry the contribution of the Macedonian and Asian churches to Jerusalem, for the poor saints there, Ro 15:25 , on which contributions he enlarges, showing not only who made them, and for whom, but the source and spring of them, they arose from their good will and pleasure, Ro 15:26 , and yet they were debtors, and under obligation to do what they did; it was but a piece of justice and equity, since those churches had received of the spiritual things of the Jews, Ro 15:27 , and as for his coming to them, he acquaints them of the time that it would be, when he had finished the above service and labour of love, and when he should come into Spain, as he had before signified, Ro 15:28 , and of the manner in which he should come, of which he was fully persuaded, as that it would be with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, Ro 15:29 , and then with great importunity desires them to pray for him, and that very earnestly, Ro 15:30 , particularly that he might be delivered from his enemies in Judea, and that the saints there would accept of what he brought them from the Gentiles, Ro 15:31 , and that, if it was the will of God, he might come to them and be refreshed with them, Ro 15:32 , and then closes the chapter with a salutation of them, or a wish that the God of peace might be with them, Ro 15:33 .

ROMANS CHAPTER 15

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience

and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

COMMENTARY CHAPTER 15

Romans 15:1

We then that are strong

Meaning not only ministers of the Gospel, who are men of strong parts, great abilities, mighty in the Scriptures, valiant for the truth on earth, and pillars in God's house; for though the apostle includes himself, yet not merely as such, but as expressing it to be his duty in common with other Christians; and the rather he does this, to engage them to the practice of it: but the stronger and more knowing part of private Christians are here intended; the Apostle John's young men, who are strong, in distinction from little children, or new born babes, that are at present weaklings; and from fathers who are on the decline of life, and just going

off the stage; see (1 John 2:12-14) ; when these young men are in the bloom and flower of a profession, in the prime of their judgment, and exercise of grace; who are strong in Christ, and not in themselves, in the grace that is in him, out of which they continually receive; who are strong in the grace of faith, and are established and settled in the doctrine of it; and have a large and extensive knowledge of the several truths of the Gospel; and, among the rest, of that of Christian liberty:

ought to bear the infirmities of the weak;

of them that are weak in faith and knowledge, particularly in the knowledge of their freedom from Mosaical observances: their “infirmities” are partly their ignorance, mistakes, and errors, about things indifferent; which they consider and insist on, and would impose upon others, as necessary and obliging; and partly the peevishness and moroseness which they show, the hard words they give, and the rash judgment and rigid censures they pass on their brethren, that differ from them: such persons and their infirmities are to be borne with; they are not to be despised for their weakness; and if in the church, are not to be excluded for their mistakes; and if not members, are not to be refused on account of them; since they arise from weakness, and are not subversive of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel: they are not to be treated as wicked men, but as weak brethren; and their peevish tempers, morose dispositions and conduct, their hard speeches and censorious expressions, are patiently to be endured; they should be considered as from whence they arise, not from malice and ill will, from a malignant spirit, but from weakness and misguided zeal, for what they take to be in force, when it is abolished: moreover, they are to be complied with in cases not sinful, as the apostle did in circumcising Timothy, (Acts 16:3) , and purifying himself according to the law, (Acts 21:26) ; and so to the weak he became weak, to gain some, (1 Corinthians 9:22) , and therefore could urge this exhortation by his own example with greater force; and which he represents, not only as what would be honourable, and a point of good nature, and as doing a kind action, but as what “ought” to be; what the law of love obliges to, and what the grace of love, which “bears all things”, (1 Corinthians 13:7) , constrains unto; and which indeed if not done, they that are strong do not answer one end of their having that spiritual strength they have; and it is but complying with the golden rule of Christ, to do as we would be done by, (Matthew 7:12

) (Luke 6:31) :

and not please ourselves:

either entertain pleasing thoughts of, and make pleasing reflections on their stronger faith, greater degree of knowledge, superior light and understanding; which being indulged, are apt to excite and encourage spiritual pride and vanity, and generally issue in the contempt of weaker brethren; nor do those things, which are pleasing and grateful to themselves, to the offence and detriment of others; for instance, and which is what the apostle has reference to, to gratify their appetite, by eating such meat as is forbidden by the law of Moses, to the grieving of the weak brethren, wounding their consciences, and destroying their peace; these things should not be done; stronger Christians should deny themselves the use of their Christian liberty in things indifferent, when they cannot make use of it without offence.

Romans 15:2

Let everyone of us please his neighbour

Every man, particularly his Christian friend and brother, whom he should seek to please in all things, and by all means lawful; he should carry it affably and courteously, should make himself agreeable to him; should condescend and accommodate himself to his weakness, and bear his infirmities, and deny himself rather than displease him. The Vulgate Latin version and some copies read, “let everyone of you”; but the other reading is preferable, and best agrees with the context, (Romans 15:1 Romans 15:4) .

For his good;

or as the Syriac renders it, (בטובה), “in good things”; for he is not to be pleased, gratified, and indulged, in any thing that is evil: we are not to please any man in anything that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ, for then we should not be faithful servants of his; nor in anything repugnant to the commands of God, and ordinances of Christ, who are to be obeyed and pleased, rather than men; nor in anything that is of an immoral nature, we are not to comply with, though it may be to the displeasure of the dearest relation and friend; but in everything that is naturally, civilly, morally, or evangelically good, we should study to please them; and in whatsoever may be for their good, temporal, spiritual, or eternal: and

to edification:

of our neighbour, brother, and Christian friend,

for the establishment of his peace, the increase of his spiritual light, and the building of him up in his most holy faith; and also of the whole community, or church, to which each belong, whose peace and edification should be consulted, and everything done, which may promote and secure it; and among which this is one, every man to please his neighbour, in things lawful and laudable.

Romans 15:3

For even Christ pleased not himself

He sought not his own ease, pleasure, profit, honour, and glory, but to do his Father’s will and work, (John 4:34) ; and he always did the things which pleased him, in his obedience, sufferings, and death; and sought not his own, but his glory: moreover, what he did and suffered were not for himself, but for us; he became incarnate for us; he obeyed, suffered, and died for us; he came not to be ministered to, to be attended upon as an earthly prince, enjoying his own ease and pleasure, things grateful to nature, but to minister to others, (Matthew 20:28) ; hence he appeared in the form of a servant, did the work of one in life, and at last became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, (Philippians 2:7 Philippians 2:8) : not but that he was well pleased in doing and suffering all this; it was his delight to do the will of God: it was his meat and drink to finish his work; yea, that part of it which was most disagreeable to flesh and blood, was most earnestly desired by him, even the baptism of his sufferings; and in the view of the salvation of his people, and of enjoying their company with him to all eternity, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame with pleasure, (Hebrews 12:2) : but then he met with many things which were far from being grateful to human nature; such as the hardness and unbelief of the Jews, with which he was grieved, their scoffs and insults, reproaches and jeers; the ignorance, frowardness, and moroseness of his own disciples, whose infirmities he bore; and at last the sufferings of death, that bitter cup, which he as man desired might pass from him; but, however, he submitted to his Father’s will, (Matthew 26:39) ; all which prove what the apostle here affirms. This instance of Christ, the man of God’s right hand, the son of man, whom he has made strong for himself, the head of the church, the leader and commander of the people, bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not pleasing himself, is very pertinently produced, to enforce the above exhortations; who is an example

to his people in the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty; as in beneficence, forgiving of injuries, mutual love, meekness and humility, suffering of afflictions, and patience. The proof of it follows,

but as it is written,

in (Psalms 69:9) ;

the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me;

which are the words of Christ unto his Father, as the whole psalm is to be understood not of David, but of the Messiah, as is clear from the citations out of it, and references to it in the New Testament; see (John 2:17) (15:25) (19:28) , compared with (Psalms 69:9 Psalms 69:4 Psalms 69:21) , and the meaning of them is, either that the reproaches which were cast on the house, worship, and ordinances of God, affected Christ as much as if they had been cast upon himself; which stirred up his zeal to take the method he did, to show his resentment at such indignities; see (John 2:15-17) , or that the same persons by whom the name of God was blasphemed, his sanctuary polluted, and his ordinances reproached, also reproached him; and he bore in his bosom the reproach of all the mighty people, which were in great plenty poured upon him; they reproached him with being a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, (Matthew 11:19) (Luke 7:34) ; they said he was a Samaritan, and had a devil, (John 8:48) : charged him with blasphemy and sedition, (Matthew 26:65) (Luke 23:2) ; and when on the cross, mocked, reviled, and wagged their heads at him, (Matthew 27:39-44) ; all which he bore patiently, and reviled not again: moreover, by “reproaches” may be meant the sins of his people, by which the name of God was blasphemed, his law trampled upon with contempt, and the perfections of his nature, as his justice and holiness, dishonoured; and which fell upon Christ, not by chance, but by the appointment of God, and according to his own voluntary agreement; and which he bore in his own body, and made satisfaction for; which though he did willingly, in order to obtain some valuable ends, the salvation of his people, and the glorifying of the divine perfections, the honouring of the law, and satisfying of justice, yet the bearing of them, in itself, could not be grateful to him as such; neither the charge of sin, nor the weight of punishment; and in this respect he pleased not himself, or did that which was grateful to his pure and holy nature.

Romans 15:4**For whatsoever things were written aforetime**

In the books of the Old Testament; the apostle says this, to vindicate the pertinency of the above citation, and to prevent any objection that might be made against it; since whatsoever was written in that psalm did not belong personally to David, but to Christ; and what is written concerning him, is designed for the use and instruction of his people; yea, whatever is written anywhere in the sacred Scriptures,

were written for our learning;

to instruct in the knowledge of Christ, of his person, offices, grace, righteousness, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; and of the great salvation and redemption he came to obtain, and has obtained; and to teach us the doctrines of grace, of pardon through the blood of Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, acceptance in his person, and eternal life through him; as also to inform us of our duty, and how we ought to behave both towards God and men:

that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope;

the Scriptures are not only written for our present instruction, but for the ingenerating, encouraging, and establishing, an hope of eternal Life in another world; which they are the means of, under the influence of divine grace; since they give us a clear account of eternal life; of the promise of it in Christ; of its being procured by him, and secured in him; of the means of enjoying it, through his blood and righteousness; of the declarations of God's free grace and mercy to sinners, and of the various instances of persons who have been made partakers of it; all which encourage to hope in the Lord, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God; believing we also may have and enjoy the thing hoped for, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures"; both which are encouraged thereby: the "patience of the Scriptures" is not a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence; and is of a different kind from that patience the writings of the Heathen philosophers define and recommend: the Scripture gives an account of the true nature of patience, in bearing all sorts of evils for Christ's sake; of the excellency and usefulness of it; and do strongly exhort unto it upon the best principles, and with the best motives; and are full of promises to the exercise of it, and furnish out the best examples of suffering affliction, and

patience: "the comfort of the Scriptures" is such as is not to be met with elsewhere. These writings abound with exceeding great and precious promises, and excellent doctrines, big with consolation to the saints; and both serve much to cherish, support, and maintain an hope of eternal happiness; all which prove the divine authority, excellency, and usefulness of the sacred writings, and recommend the reading of them by us, and the hearing of them explained by others.

Romans 15:5**Now the God of patience and consolation**

These titles and characters of God are manifestly used on account of what is before said concerning the Scriptures, and to show, that the efficacy and usefulness of them, in producing and promoting patience and comfort, entirely depend upon God the author of them: from exhorting, the apostle proceeds to petitioning; well knowing that all his exhortations would be of no avail without the power of divine grace accompanying them. The words are a prayer. The object addressed is described as "the God of patience", because he is the author and giver of that grace: it is a fruit of his Spirit, produced by the means of his word, called the word of his patience. The Heathens themselves were so sensible that this is a divine blessing, that they call patience (yewn eurhma), "the invention of the gods" F23. God is the great pattern and exemplar of patience; he is patient himself, and bears much and long with the children of men; with wicked men, whose patient forbearance and longsuffering being despised by them, will be an aggravation of their damnation; but his longsuffering towards his elect issues in their salvation: he waits to be gracious to them before conversion, and after it bears with their infirmities, heals their backslidings, forgives their iniquities, patiently hears their cues, requests, and complaints, relieves and supports them, and carries them even to hoary hairs; and is in all a pattern to be imitated by his people. He is also the object of this grace; he it is on whom and for whom saints should and do patiently wait, until he is pleased to manifest himself, and communicate to them for the supply of their wants of every sort; and upon whose account and for whose sake they patiently suffer reproach and persecution; the exercise of patience is what he requires, and calls for, and is very grateful and well pleasing to him; to all which add, that he it is who strengthens to the exercise of it, and increases it; and which he does sometimes

by tribulation; faith and other graces, being thereby tried, produce patience; and which at length, through divine grace, has its perfect work. Moreover, the object of prayer is described, as "the God of consolation"; all true, real, solid comfort springs from him, which he communicates by his son, the consolation of Israel; by his Spirit, the comforter; by his word, the doctrines and promises of which afford strong consolation to the heirs of promise, sensible sinners and afflicted souls; by the ordinances of the Gospel, which are breasts of consolation; and by the faithful ministers of Christ, who are "Barnabases", sons of consolation, (Acts 4:36) . The petition follows,

grant you to be like minded one towards another;

which does not respect sameness of judgment in the doctrines of faith; though this is very necessary to an honourable and comfortable walking together in church fellowship; much less an agreement in things indifferent: the apostle's meaning is not, that they should all abstain from meats forbidden by the law of Moses, or that they should all eat every sort of food without distinction; nor that they should all observe any Jewish day, or that they should all observe none; rather, that everyone should enjoy his own sentiment, and practise as he believed: but this request regards a likeness of affection, the sameness of mutual love, that they be of one heart, and one soul; that notwithstanding their different sentiments about things of a ceremonious kind, yet that they should love one another, and cease either to despise or judge each other; but think as well and as highly of them that differ from them, as of themselves, and of those of their own sentiments, without preferring in affection one to another; but studying and devising to promote and maintain, as the Syriac here reads it, (atwywv) , "an equality" among them; showing the same equal affection and respect to one as to the other, and to one another; the Jew to the Gentile, and the Gentile to the Jew; the strong to the weak, and the weak to the strong. This is what is greatly desirable. It is grateful to God; it is earnestly wished for by the ministers of the Gospel: and is pleasant and delightful to all good men; but it is God alone that can give and continue such a Spirit: this the apostle knew, and therefore prays that he would "grant" it: and for which request there is a foundation for faith and hope concerning it; since God has promised he will give his people one heart, and one way, as to fear him, so to love one another. The rule or pattern, according to

which this is desired, is next expressed,

according to Christ Jesus;

according to the doctrine of Christ, which teaches, directs, and engages, as to sameness of judgment and practice, so to mutual love and affection; and according to the new commandment of Christ, which obliges to love one another; and according to the example of Christ, who is the great pattern of patience and forbearance, of meekness and humility, of condescension and goodness, and of equal love and affection to all his members.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 Archilochus apud Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 7. c. 12.

Romans 15:6**That ye may with one mind and one mouth;**

&c.] This is the end for which the above request is made, and shows, that a cordial and sincere affection for one another is necessary to the worshipping of God with one consent, to a joining together in acts of religious service, both in praying to God, and in praising of him, which latter seems here chiefly designed; for how should there be an agreement of heart and voice, of mind and mouth, in praising God, unless there is a singleness of heart, and oneness of affection? This is necessary in order to

glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Syriac and Arabic versions read, God "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; leaving out, the copulative, which we translate "even", but may as well be rendered "and"; and be read, as by some, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who prepared the human nature for him, anointed it with the Holy Spirit, supported it in life, in sufferings and death, and glorified it at his own right hand; and in which nature Christ exercised every grace on him, as faith, hope, and love; discharged every duty to him, worshipped him, prayed unto him, and was in all things obedient to his will: and God is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for as man he had no father. Now he is "glorified" when the perfections of his nature are ascribed unto him; when notice is taken of the works of his hands, and the glory of his majesty, which appears in them; when praise is offered up, and thanks given for all mercies, temporal and spiritual, he bestows on his people; when they join together in the solemn

worship of him, presenting their bodies, and giving up their hearts unto him; when they unite in praying to him, and singing his praise; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to their profession of him.

Romans 15:7

Wherefore receive ye one another

Into your hearts and affections; embrace one another cordially, the Jew the Gentile, the Gentile the Jew, the strong brother the weak, the weak the strong:

as Christ also received us.

The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read “you”. Both Jews and Gentiles, as appears from the following verses. Christ received all the chosen ones into his heart’s love and affection from eternity; he received them in the council of peace, and when the covenant of grace was made at his Father’s hands, in the most tender manner, in order to take the care of them, preserve and save them; he assumed their nature, took upon him their sins, and sustained their persons in time, when he became incarnate, and suffered and died for them; and he receives them in the effectual calling on their coming to him, which he encourages by assuring them, that he will in no wise cast them out; so far is he from it, that he embraces them with open arms, and in the most affectionate manner receives them, though sinners, and eats with them; and notwithstanding all their unworthiness, sins, and transgressions:

to the glory of God:

that is, either in order to bring them to the enjoyment of eternal life and happiness; which is sometimes so called, because of the glory that shall be beheld by the saints, be revealed in them, and put upon them, both in soul and body; and which is all of God’s preparing and bestowing, and will lie in the vision and enjoyment of him: for this they were chosen in Christ, given to him, and received by him before the world began; and that they might enjoy it, Christ came into this world, took on him their persons, and died in their stead; and to this they are called by his grace with an holy calling; and when he has guided them with his counsel through this world, he will receive them to this glory: or else by “the glory of God” is meant the glorifying of God, the perfections of God, as his wisdom, power, faithfulness, truth, justice, holiness, love, grace, and mercy, and the like; which is done by Christ’s becoming the surety,

and Mediator of the new covenant, (Hebrews 7:22) (8:6) (9:15) (12:24) , by his assumption of human nature, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and by obtaining redemption for his people: and the force of the apostle’s exhortation and argument is, that as Christ has received his people both in eternity and time, in so tender a manner, though unworthy, whereby he has glorified God, which was the principal end in view, and next to that the glorifying of them; so it becomes them to be like minded to one another, (Romans 15:5) , and affectionately receive and embrace each other, that so they may join together in glorifying the God and Father of Christ also, (Romans 15:6) .

Romans 15:8

Now I say

Or affirm that Christ has received both Jews and Gentiles: that he has received the Jews, and therefore they are not to be despised, though they are weak, appears from hence,

that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision;

he is rightly called a minister, for this was the end of his coming into the world, and the whole of his work in it was not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others, (Matthew 20:28) (Mark 10:45) , both in life and at death. This character agrees with him in all his offices; as King he ministers judgment to the people; and as priest he is the minister of the true tabernacle of the human nature, (Hebrews 8:2) , in which he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, and now in it makes intercession for them; but here it is expressive of his prophetic office, in which he is such a minister as never was before, or since, or ever will be; if we consider the dignity of his person, being the Son of God; the greatness of his qualifications, having the Spirit without measure; the nature of his doctrines, which were amazing words of grace and truth; and the manner of his delivery, which was with authority; and that all other ministers receive their mission, qualifications, doctrine and success from him: he is styled a minister of “the circumcision”, not literally considered, as if he administered circumcision to any, which he did not; he was indeed subject to it as a son of Abraham, as a Jew by birth, as under the law, and in order to fulfil all righteousness, (Matthew 3:15) , and to show that he was truly man, and that he had regard to the people and ordinances of the Old Testament, as he showed by baptism he had to those of the New, and

to signify our cleansing and atonement by his blood; but circumcision is either to be understood in a spiritual sense of circumcision in the Spirit, and not in the flesh, with which the true circumcision, or believers in Christ, are circumcised in him, through his circumcision; or rather the word here is to be taken metonymically, for the uncircumcised Jews, as it often is in this epistle; see (Romans 2:26) (3:30) (4:9) . So that the meaning is, that Christ was their minister and preacher, just as Peter is said to have the apostleship of the circumcision, (Galatians 2:8) , or to be the apostle of the Jews; as Paul was of the Gentiles, (Romans 11:13) , and to have the Gospel of the circumcision committed to him, it being his province to preach it to them, (Galatians 2:7 Galatians 2:8) , Christ as a minister or preacher in the personal discharge of his prophetic office, was sent only to the Jews; among them he lived, and to them he only preached; nor did he allow his apostles to preach to any other till after his resurrection; and which is a manifest proof that he received the Jews, and took them under his care, and showed a particular regard unto them: the ends of his being a minister to them were,

for the truth of God;

to preach the Gospel of salvation, the word of truth unto them, for which he was promised and sent; and in doing of which he declared the righteousness, faithfulness, loving kindness, and truth of God unto them:

and to confirm the promises made unto the fathers;

the fathers of the world, Adam, Noah or rather the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; concerning the Messiah’s being the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, and of David; concerning the coming of Shiloh, the raising up of the great prophet among the Jews all which promises are yea and amen in Christ, ratified and fulfilled in him.

Romans 15:9

And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy

In choosing them in Christ as vessels of mercy, and in redeeming them by Christ as well as the Jews, and in regenerating and calling them by his abundant grace; and which as they clearly show that Christ has received them, and therefore are not to be censured and judged as irreligious persons, because of the use of their Christian

liberty; so these things lay them under obligations to glorify God, to show forth his praise both by lip and life, since what they enjoy is not by promise, as the Jews, but of mere mercy; not but that promises arise from grace and mercy, though the accomplishment of them is owing to truth and faithfulness; but the Gentiles had no promises made to them, and yet obtained mercy, though there were many promises made concerning them, and many oracles and predictions in favour of them stood on divine record; some of which the apostle here produces to prove what he had asserted, that Christ had received them, and they were bound to glorify God on that account:

as it is written,

in (Psalms 18:49) ;

for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name;

which words are not spoken unto God by David, literally, considered, but as representing the Messiah; for David when he penned this Psalm, was in the decline of life; the next account after this is of his last dying words, (2 Samuel 23:1) ; nor could he hope to praise God among the Gentiles, nor did he in person, but in his Son the Messiah. These words are the words of Christ unto his Father, who in the title of the psalm is called “the servant of God”, he being the Mediator eminently; he is represented as encompassed with the sorrows and snares of death and the grave, which agree with Jesus when in the garden, and on the cross. God is all along in it spoken as his helper and deliverer, as he was to Christ in his human nature, having promised to be so, and on which he depended; and the person, the subject of the psalm, is a victorious person, one that has got the conquest over all enemies, which is in the fullest sense true of the Messiah, who has overcome the world, made an end of sin, destroyed Satan, spoiled principalities and powers, and abolished death; and particularly is said to be the head of the Heathen, and they to be voluntary subjects to him, (Psalms 18:43 Psalms 18:44) , which is expressed in much the same language as the like things are in (Isaiah 55:4 Isaiah 55:5) ; which is so manifest a prophecy of the Messiah; add to all which, that the Lord’s anointed, the King Messiah, and who is called David, is expressly mentioned in the words following these that are cited, and which are applied by the Jews F24 themselves to the Messiah; as is (Psalms 18:32) paraphrased of him, by the Targumist upon it: what is here said by the Messiah

to God, is that he would “confess to him among the Gentiles”; which is to be understood not of confession of sin, or of a confession of faith in him; but of praise and thanksgiving, a celebration of his perfections, particularly his, race, mercy, and goodness; ascribing honour and glory to him, either for the conversion of the Gentiles, as he did in the believing Jews, (Acts 11:18) , or by the mouth of the Gentiles, for what God had done in bringing the Gospel to them, (Acts 13:48) , or among them, by his apostles and ministers of the Gospel being made very successful among them, and made to triumph in Christ, whilst they diffused the savour of his knowledge in every place. The word “Lord” is omitted in this citation, though it appears in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens’s copies: “and sing unto thy name”; psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the glory of his grace, as in all the churches of the Gentiles, to which they are directed by the Spirit of Christ, (Ephesians 5:19) (Colossians 3:16) .

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Midrash Tillim in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Romans 15:10

And again he saith

God or Christ, in (Deuteronomy 32:43) ;

rejoice ye Gentiles with his people;

which from the Hebrew text are by some rendered, “rejoice his people O ye Gentiles”; to which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, who render it, “praise O ye nations his people”; or as some copies of the former, “the judgment of his people”; and the latter adds, the house of Israel. The note of R. Sol. Jarchi on the text is,

“at that time the nations shall praise Israel; see what is the praise of this people that cleave unto the Lord”

But the design of this song is to praise God, and not the people of Israel; who in it are severely reprov'd for their many iniquities, and especially their very great ingratitude to God, and are threatened with the heaviest judgments. This is seen by other Jewish writers, who interpret the words accordingly, as R. Aben Ezra does, whose note is

“then shall they praise him, when God

shall avenge their blood;”

and to this sense is the Jerusalem Targum,

“praise before him O ye people, praise him O his people of the house of Israel;”

but the words may be better translated either thus, “rejoice O ye nations, his people”; that is, ye Gentiles who are his people, whom God has taken into his covenant, and whom he will declare as such in his own time, which time was now come, and therefore had reason to rejoice; see (1 Peter 2:9 1 Peter 2:10) ; or thus, “rejoice ye Gentiles, and his people”; let both Jews and Gentiles rejoice; let them rejoice together when they come to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises and privileges; when they shall be together in one fold, under one shepherd; and especially when the fulness of each of them is brought in, and God has avenged himself of his and their enemies; and which agrees with the apostle’s sense, and whose version is supported by the Septuagint interpreters; and his supplement is to be justified, there only wanting a copulative in the Hebrew text, which is often the case in that language, and which may easily be supplied by “and” or “with”; as it is with the latter by the apostle, in perfect agreement with the sense of the words.

Romans 15:11

And again

It is written in (Psalms 117:1) ,

praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people;

that is, praise him both Jews and Gentiles, for his merciful kindness and truth, as in (Romans 15:2) ; the Gentiles for his mercy in choosing, redeeming, and calling them, as before; and the Jews for his truth and faithfulness in the fulfilment of his praises. R. David Kimchi on this psalm observes, that

“it consists of two verses only, and that it belongs (לִיְמֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ) , “to the days of the Messiah”; and intimates, by the composition of it in two verses only, that all people shall be divided into two parts, or be on two sides, Israel shall be in their law, and all the nations in seven precepts,”

i.e. of Noah.

Romans 15:12

And again Esaias saith

In (Isaiah 11:10) ;

there shall be a root of Jesse.

This prophecy is applied to the Messiah by the Jews F25, who say,

“that when the King Messiah is revealed, there shall be gathered to him all the nations of the world, so that that Scripture shall be fulfilled which is written, “there shall be a root of Jesse””

This character, “the root of Jesse”, may be understood of Christ with respect to his divine nature, who, as God, was before Jesse, and the author of his being, as of all creatures; just in such sense as he is called “the root and offspring of David”, (Revelation 5:5) (22:16) ; the root of David, as he is God, and the offspring of David, as he is man; unless both are to be interpreted of his human nature, as the phrase here also may be, and denote his descent from Jesse as man; and so the Jewish writers interpret it as well as some Christian ones. This is R. David Kimchi’s comment;

“and there shall be a root of Jesse”; the meaning is, (yvy) (vrvv auwyh) , “which goes out from the root of Jesse”, according to (Isaiah 11:1) , for “Jesse” is the root. And so the Targum of Jonathan, (yvyd hyrb rb) , “the son’s son of Jesse;”

that is, David’s son, the King Messiah, who sprung from Jesse’s family, when that family was very low and mean, like to a tree cut down to, its roots, and to a root in a dry ground; out of which sprung the man the branch, David’s son and Lord. This character may be applied to Christ as Mediator, who as a root is unseen and unknown to carnal men, and mean, abject, and of no account in the eyes of the world; the root that not only bears Jesse, David, and other good men, but all the branches of God’s elect, from whom they have their beings, both in a natural and spiritual sense; which communicates life and nourishment to them; in whom their life is hid, and is safe when scarcely to be discerned in them; and from whom they have all their fruitfulness, and to whom is owing their perseverance in faith and holiness.

And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles;

or, as the Syriac version, “and he that shall rise shall be a prince unto the Gentiles”; or, as the Arabic, “and he that shall rise out of it”, the root, “shall rule over the Gentiles”. In the Hebrew text in Isaiah, this is said

of the root, and to be read thus, “which shall stand for an ensign of the people”, (Isaiah 11:10) ; because mention is made of a root, the apostle expresses the standing of it by rising out of it, which signifies both the incarnation and exaltation of Christ; and because an ensign is a token of power and government, therefore he has rendered it to “reign”, agreeably enough to the sense; since upon Christ’s exaltation, and setting up his ensign or standard, the Gospel, in the Gentile world, multitudes became voluntary subjects to him, and still do; over whom he rules by his grace and Spirit, and will more largely and manifestly in the latter day, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his. In like manner R. Aben. Ezra explains the words of the Messiah.

“Says he, this may be understood, for all the whole world shall be (wtwvr txt) , “under his power”, or government.”

And so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases them, “and kingdoms shall obey him”; so that the Jew can have no reason to complain of the apostle’s version.

In him shall the Gentiles trust,

or “hope”; this in the Hebrew text is, “to him shall the Gentiles seek”; which cannot be truly done without faith and hope; see (Hebrews 11:6) ; for the hope and faith of enjoying what is sought for, put persons upon seeking: so that the apostle here gives us the true sense of the words, and most fully describes the affection of the Gentiles to Christ; who having some knowledge of him, seek unto him for life and salvation, prostrate themselves at his feet, venture upon him, commit themselves to him, and hope and trust in him. This part of the prophecy is by the Jews understood of the Messiah.

“All the Gentiles (says R. David Kimchi on the text) shall seek (xyvmh la) , “to the Messiah”, and shall go after him to do what he commands; all of them shall obey him.”

But why no mention made of the Israelites seeking to the Messiah? hear what they say, and which still confirms the sense of these words F26.

“The Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the King Messiah in future time, as it is said, “to him shall the Gentiles seek”, and not the Israelites.”

True enough! The apostle dwells on the proof of

this point, it not being so easy of belief with the Jews, but makes it clear from the law, psalms, and prophets, which is the threefold division of the writings of the Old Testament; see (Luke 24:44) .

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 1. Vid. R. Aben Ezra & R. David Kimchi in loc.

F26 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. & Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 3. c. 9.

Romans 15:13

Now the God of hope

This character is taken from the latter part of (Romans 15:12) , and is occasioned by it, “in him shall the Gentiles trust”, or “hope”; and is proper to God as he is the author and giver of this grace; for naturally men are without it; that which is a good hope is the gift of God, and through his grace, and is wrought in the heart in regeneration; for to this are the children of God begotten again. Moreover, God is the object of it; not wealth and riches, nor works of righteousness, but Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, particularly Christ, is called the believer’s hope; that is, the object of it, in whom the Gentiles hope and trust. Likewise, it is God that encourages to the exercise of it by the proclamations of his grace, and mercy, and plenteous redemption; by the discoveries of his love, and views of interest in him; and by bringing to mind the past experiences of his goodness: he preserves and maintains this grace useful and lively, firm and steadfast, at least in being, which sometimes seems almost perished and gone; he increases it, and causes his people to abound in the exercise of it, and continues it even unto death. The Ethiopic version reads, “the God of our promises”, which are what hope has respect unto, and builds upon:

fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

This is a petition to the God of hope. The apostle has recourse again to prayer, knowing that all his exhortations would be useless, without the grace of God accompanying them: and it is observable, that he prays for the same things mentioned in the above prophecies and promises, as joy, peace, and hope; for though God has promised ever so great things concerning his people, he will be inquired of by them to do them for them. One part of this petition is, that God would “fill them with all joy”; not with every kind of joy; not with worldly joy, or with the joy of hypocrites, who rejoice in sin, or in their own boastings, which is evil; but with spiritual

joy, joy in God as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, in his person, righteousness, and salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, the author of it, whose fruit it is; and in the Gospel, doctrines, blessings, and promises of it; and in the view and hope of the heavenly glory, amidst various afflictions and tribulations: and it designs an abundance of it, even a fulness thereof; though the petition implies, that as yet it is not full; it is frequently interrupted and broke in upon by the corruption of nature, and falls into sin, by the temptations of Satan, through divine desertions, and various trials and exercises; yet it supposes it may be increased, as by the renewed discoveries of the love of God, of interest in Christ, and through the gracious influences of the Spirit; and even made full and complete, though not in this, yet in the other world: another branch of the petition is, that God would fill with “peace”, with a sense of their peace with him, made by the blood of Christ; with a conscience peace in their own breasts, arising from a view of their justification by the righteousness of Christ, and from the sprinklings of his blood upon them; and also with peace one among another, which was much wanting, and the apostle was very desirous of: and all this he asks, that it might come to them “in believing”; in the way of faith, and the exercise of that grace; for joy comes this way; faith and joy go together; where one is, the other is also; and as the one increases, so does the other; a believing view of interest in Christ is attended with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: and so peace comes in at the door of faith: there is no true peace till a soul is brought to believe in Christ; and that is promoted and increased by repeated acts of faith on Christ, or by a constant living by faith on him; see (Isaiah 26:3) . The end for which this petition is made is,

that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

By hope is meant that grace which God is the author, object, and promoter of; and the Syriac version reads it, (hrbob) , “in his hope”, or “the hope of him”; of enjoying him, of meeting with him, and having communion with him in his house and ordinances; of having fresh supplies of grace from him, and of being favoured with all the blessings of grace laid up in an everlasting covenant, and at last with eternal life and glory: to “abound” herein, is to be in the free and frequent exercise of this grace, being encouraged by the grace of God, and an enlarged experience of it, and supported by faith, the substance of things hoped for: and this “through the power of the

Holy Ghost”; not by might or power of man, but by that same divine power which first began the good work, and must fulfil it; which at first implanted the grace of hope, and must perform the work of that, as of faith. The same power is requisite to cause grace to abound, or saints to abound in the exercise of it, as was to the first production of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, “that ye may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost”; but there is no copulative in the Greek text.

Romans 15:14

And I myself also am persuaded of you

This is said by way of prevention to an objection that might be made to the apostle’s prayers and exhortations by the Romans. What does the apostle mean by all this? what does he think of us, or take us to be? men that live in malice to one another, devoid of all humanity, and mutual respect? a parcel of fools and ignorant men, that know nothing of divine things? and though there may be some that are much to be blamed for their conduct and carriage to their fellow Christians, what, are there none among us fit to give advice and admonition? To which the apostle replies, that he was far from entertaining such thoughts of them; that though he had not seen them in person, yet he had had such an account of their faith and practice, which were famous throughout the world, that he was thoroughly persuaded of better things of them, though he thus spake; and therefore, to mollify them, and abate their resentment, he adds,

my brethren;

testifying his affection to them, owning the spiritual relation they stood in to him, and declaring the great esteem he had for them, and the high opinion he had of them: saying,

that ye also are full of goodness;

not naturally, for there is no good thing in men by nature, but what they had was from the Spirit of God, whose fruit is “goodness”: and by which may be meant, either the good gifts of the Spirit of God, or rather his graces, even the good work of grace in general, and which is goodness itself: it comes from a good cause, the good Spirit of God; is good in its own nature, not having the least mixture or tincture of evil in it; and good in its effects, since it makes and denominates a man a good man; now these saints might be said to be full of this, to denote the abundance, the superabundance of grace in this work: or particularly beneficence, humanity, and

sympathy to fellow Christians, may be intended. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “full of love”: but the copies and eastern versions read as we do.

Filled with all knowledge;

not with every sort of knowledge, with the knowledge of all languages, or of all the arts and sciences, of all things, natural and political; but with all spiritual knowledge relating to God, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; to Christ and the work of redemption by him; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace; to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to their duty to God, fellow creatures, and fellow Christians; in short, with all knowledge necessary to salvation, though as yet not perfect, and which will not be in this world, but in another:

able also to admonish one another;

as they must be, since they were both good and knowing; goodness and knowledge are necessary to admonition, and qualify persons for it: if a man is not a good man himself, he is not fit to admonish another; and if he has not knowledge, he will not be able to do it as it should be; and without humanity and tenderness, he will not perform it aright, and with success; but all this being in these persons, they were able and fit for it. Some copies read it, “able also to admonish others”; so the Syriac version renders; which makes the expression still stronger, and enlarges their praise and commendation.

Romans 15:15

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you

Or freely, in taking notice of their party contentions and ill usage of each other, and in reproving, advising, and exhorting them; and which he excuses by observing, that it was,

in some sort,

or “in part” only; meaning either that it was only in some part of the epistle he had took such a liberty, which is the sense of the Arabic version, which renders it, “in some parts of the oration”; or else that he had regard not to all of them, but to some only, to a part of the church who were most culpable; and did not design a charge against them all, and that what he said should be applied to the whole body; or rather that the boldness and freedom he had taken was but in some sort, it was but in part: this he says to mitigate it, and that it might

not be thought to be so large as it might appear at first; it was but “a little more boldly”, that he wrote unto them, as the Syriac renders it; for this clause is not to be read in connection with the word “written”, as if the apostle had only wrote of the doctrines of grace in some sort, or in part, for he declared the whole counsel of God, and never kept back anything profitable to the churches: he adds,

as putting you in mind;

which is also said to excuse his writing, and the manner of it; he did not take upon him to be their teacher and instructor, to inform them of things they knew nothing of; only to be their monitor, to put them in mind of and refresh their memories with what they had been well instructed and established in before; see (2 Peter 1:12 2 Peter 1:13) ;

because of the grace that is given to me of God;

meaning not the doctrine of “grace, concerning” which, as the Ethiopic version renders it, he was putting them in mind; nor the internal grace of the Spirit, by which he was inclined and assisted to write unto them; but the grace of apostleship, or that high office, which, by the grace of God, and not because of any merits of his, he was called unto: this he mentions also to excuse the freedom of his writing; since what he did was in consequence of, pursuant and agreeably to, his office as an apostle; and therefore could not have answered it to God, or them, if he had not done it; wherefore he hoped it would be took well by them.

Romans 15:16

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ

The office of apostleship is here amplified and enlarged on, and the ends shown for which that grace was given to him, that he should be a minister; not in holy things about the temple, as the priests and Levites were; or a teacher of the law, some were fond of; but a minister of Christ, one that was made so by him, was qualified and sent forth to minister in his name to men; and who was a preacher of him; Jesus Christ, and him crucified, was the grand subject of his ministrations; he adds,

to the Gentiles;

for to them, though not to the exclusion of the Jews, was he appointed a minister by Christ, and sent by him to them; among them he chiefly ministered, and was particularly and eminently useful to them; and this is

another reason why the Romans ought to bear with a little boldness and freedom in writing to them, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles:

ministering the Gospel of God;

not the service of the temple, nor the traditions of the elders, nor the law of Moses, nor the morality of the Heathens; but the Gospel, of which God is the author, whose grace is the subject, and whose glory is the end; and is good news from him to the chief of sinners; to the preaching of which the apostle was separated by him:

that the offering up of the Gentiles;

not the offering the Gentiles offered up, their prayers, praises, or good works, though these are acceptable to God through Christ; but the Gentiles themselves, by the offering up of whom is meant their conversion; which was the end of the apostle’s ministering the Gospel among them, and in which he was the happy instrument. The allusion is to the priests slaying and offering up sacrifices under the law. The apostle was a priest in a figurative and improper sense; the sacrifices he offered up were not slain beasts, but men, the Gentiles, cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit, the ministry of the Gospel; whose inside being laid open to them, and they brought to a sense of their lost condition, and need of Christ, were, through the power of divine grace attending the word, made willing to offer, or give up themselves to the Lord, to be saved by him, and him only: this the apostle, as an instrument, was concerned in; and all his view was, that it

might be acceptable;

that is, to God, as nothing is more so to him than a broken and a contrite heart, or souls brought to a sense of themselves; and to believe in Christ, and submit to his righteousness; and then both ministers and converts are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ:

being sanctified by the Holy Ghost;

this is said in allusion to the washing of the sacrifices under the law; and intimates, that the Gentiles, though unclean by nature and practice, yet being sanctified by the Spirit of God, whose proper work it is to sanctify, become an acceptable, being an holy sacrifice to an holy God.

Romans 15:17

I have therefore whereof I may glory

Not in himself, for he that taught others not to glory

in men, would not glory in himself; not in his carnal descent and fleshly privileges; nor in his knowledge of, and compliance with, the ceremonies of the law; nor in his legal, moral, and civil righteousness before God; nor in his gifts and attainments, as merited and procured by himself; nor in his labours in the ministry, and the success of it, as of himself: but

through Jesus Christ;

or “in Jesus Christ”, as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; in what Christ was unto him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: he could boast of what he had from him, and through him, even of all spiritual blessings in him; and of a large measure of grace he had received from him; and of great and eminent gifts Christ had bestowed on him; he gloried in his cross, and boasted of a crucified Jesus, whom others despised; and whom he made the subject of his ministry, and took delight in preaching: and freely owned that all he did was through Christ strengthening him; and that all his success in his work was owing to him, and of this he had to glory: and which was

in those things which pertain to God;

not “with God”, as the Syriac reads it; for though in some cases it may be lawful to glory before men, yet not before God, or in his presence: nor is it anything a man may glory in, not in his own things, but in the things of God; in things relating to the Gospel of God, to the pure preaching of it, to the furtherance and spread of it, and the recommending of it to others; to the worship and ordinances of God, and a spiritual attendance on them; to the grace of God, and the magnifying of that in the business of salvation; and to the glory of God, which ought to be the chief end of all actions, natural, moral, and religious, and whether private or public. The apostle has chiefly reference to his ministerial function, and the things of God relating to that, in which he was employed; see (Hebrews 5:1) .

Romans 15:18

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things

He suggests that the false teachers did speak of things which were not done by them at all, and much less were what Christ had done by them; and signifies that he was a conscientious man, and could speak nothing but what was truth; his conscience would not suffer him, nor could he allow himself to make mention of anything, that was not done by him, as if it was; nor

of anything that was done by himself, nor of anything that was done, as if it was done by himself, but as it was wrought by Christ; nor had he any need to speak of any other things which he had wrought himself, as he could not of what he had not wrought at all; or, as he says,

which Christ hath not wrought by me:

signifying that what he had wrought, and which he could with good conscience speak of to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his grace, were not wrought by himself, but what Christ wrought by him; he was only the instrument, Christ was the efficient cause: as a Christian, it was not he that lived, but Christ lived in him; as a minister, it was not he that spoke, but Christ spoke in him; nor was it he that laboured, but the grace of Christ that was with him; much less was it he that converted souls, but Christ did it by him:

to make the Gentiles obedient;

the nations of the world, who had been brought up in blindness and ignorance of God, in rebellion and disobedience to him. The Gospel was sent among them, and was blessed unto them, to make them, of disobedient, obedient ones; not to men, but to God; not to magistrates and ministers, though they were taught to be so to both, but to Christ; to him as a priest, by being made willing to be saved by him, and him only, renouncing their own works, and disclaiming all other ways of salvation; and to submit to his righteousness for their justification before God, and acceptance with him; and to deal with his precious blood for pardon and cleansing; to rely on his sacrifice for the atonement of their sins, and to make use of him as the new and living way to the Father, as their one and only mediator, advocate, and intercessor; and to him as a prophet, to the faith of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; not barely by hearing it, and notionally assenting to it, but by embracing it heartily, and professing it publicly and sincerely; and to him as a King, by owning him as such, and as theirs; and by subjecting to his ordinances, and obeying his commands in faith and fear, and from love to him: the means whereby these persons were brought to the obedience of Christ, and of faith, are by word and deed;

or “deeds”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: by the former is meant, the word of the Gospel and the preaching of it, being sent unto them, and coming with power, and not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and by the latter, either the labour of the apostle, the pains he took, the hardships

he endured, in ministering: the Gospel to them; or his agreeable life and conversation, which were a means of recommending the word, and of engaging an attention to it; or rather the miraculous works and mighty deeds which were wrought by the apostle, in confirmation of the doctrine he preached, as it seems to be explained in (Romans 15:19).

Romans 15:19

Through mighty signs and wonders

Or “in”, or “through the power of signs and wonders”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words. These carrying along with them evidence and conviction of the truth of what was delivered, wrought wonderfully and powerfully on the minds of the Gentiles to embrace the Gospel, and submit to the ordinances of it; though all would have been insufficient, had it not been for what follows,

by the power of the Spirit of God:

the Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens’s read, “by the power of the Holy Spirit”, and so does the Vulgate Latin version; meaning, either that the mighty signs and wonders in healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead were performed not by the efficacy and working of Satan, as the signs and lying wonders of antichristian men, but by the Spirit of God, by whom Christ and all his apostles wrought the miracles they did; or that the ministration of the word in which the apostle laboured, was by the power of the Spirit of God; it was he that imparted all spiritual gifts to him, qualifying him for this service; it was he that assisted him in it, and enabled him to go through it; it was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that he performed it; and that not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: or else that the obedience of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the wonderful works that attended it as means, were purely owing to the power of the Spirit of God, as the efficient cause; it was not by might, or power of the preacher; nor merely by the power of signs and wonders; but by the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God, who took away the stony, stubborn, and disobedient heart, and gave them an heart of flesh, a tender, flexible, and obedient one; and caused them to walk in and observe the commandments and ordinances of the Lord:

so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto

Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ;

that which Christ, as God, is the author of; as man, was a preacher and minister of; and, as Mediator, is the subject matter of: this the apostle “preached fully” and completely, every part and branch of it, kept back nothing of it, but faithfully declared the whole; and so fulfilled it, as the word may be rendered, and his ministry; or he filled the Gospel, the net of the Gospel, which he spread in every place; or rather he diffused the knowledge of it everywhere; he filled all places with it wherever he came, even “from Jerusalem” round about unto Illyricum: not that he began to preach at Jerusalem, but at Damascus; from whence he went to Arabia, and after that to Jerusalem; but inasmuch as he was of Jerusalem, and had preached there, from whence the Gospel originally came, and this was the boundary of his ministry one way, he makes mention of it; as Illyricum was the boundary of it another way, which was on the extreme part of Macedonia: it is now called Sclavonia, and is an European nation; part of it is Dalmatia, mentioned (2 Timothy 4:10). Apollonia was in it, according to Mela F26, where the apostle is said to pass through, (Acts 17:1), it has on the south the gulf of Venice, on the north the Danube, on the west Germany, and on the east Thracia and Macedonia: according to Ptolomy {a}, Illyris, or Illyricum, was bounded on the north with upper and lower Pannonia, now called Hungary and Austria; on the east with upper Mysia, now Servia; and on the south with part of Macedonia; it lies over against Italy, the Adriatic sea being between them; its length, from the river Drinus to Arsa, is reckoned about 480 miles, and its breadth, from the mountains of Croatia to the sea, is computed to be about 120: it is by some divided into Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Albania; Slavonia is the western part, Albania the eastern, and Dalmatia between them; according to others, it includes Slavonia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia; and had its name of Illyricum, from Illyrius, the son of Cadmus; or as others, from Illyrius, the son of Celta: here the Gospel was preached by the Apostle Paul, and no doubt with success; and churches were planted here, and which remained for several ages: in the “second” century there was a church in Illyricum, and Eleutherius was bishop, who is said to be a famous teacher; he was born at Rome, and his mother Anthia is reported to be converted by the Apostle Paul; in the same age lived one Quirinus, first a tribune, and then a bishop of Illyricum, who became a martyr under Trajan: in the “third” century there were churches in Illyricum, though devastations

were made in it by the Goths; in the “fourth” century, frequent mention is made of the churches in Illyricum; and the bishops convened at Rome under Damascus in the times of Constantius wrote with great respect to the brethren in Illyricum; in Siscia, a city in this country, Quirinus a bishop suffered martyrdom; here a synod met against the Arians, and yet many in this country were infected with that heresy, by Valens and Ursatius; in this age Hilary, of Poitiers in France, spread the Gospel in this country; and he and Eusebius of Vercelli, in Piedmont, visited the churches, and corrected what was amiss: in the “fifth” century there was a church in Illyricum, and in Salo, a city of Dalmatia, Glycerius was bishop: in the “sixth” century there were also churches here, as appears from the letter of Symmachus to the bishops of them, and to their people; and in this age also Gregory wrote to all the bishops in Illyricum, to receive such bishops as were banished: in the “eighth” century, the bishops of Illyricum were in the Nycene synod, and Boniface gathered a church in Slavonia {b}; thus far Christianity may be traced in this country: hither the apostle went, not in a direct line, but round about, and took many countries, cities, and towns in his way, as the history of his journeys and travels in the Acts of the Apostles shows, and as he here suggests.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 De orbis situ, l. 2. c. 10.

F1 Geograph. l. 2. c. 17.

F2 Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 158. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. 14. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. c. 3. p. 22. c. 5. p. 181, 182. c. 7. p. 311. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 7. c. 3. p. 33. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 7.

Romans 15:20

Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel

The sense is, not barely that he strove to preach the Gospel and not the law, the pure Gospel, and, not a mixed one; nor only that he endeavoured to preach it fully, and leave out nothing; but that he had an holy ambition to preach it,

not where Christ was named;

as in Judea, where he had been for many ages spoken of and expected, and where he had lately appeared, lived, suffered, and died, and where his Gospel had been preached by all the apostles; as also in such parts of the Gentile world, where others of the apostles had been, and had made mention of his name, and published the

glad tidings of salvation by him; but he chose rather to go to such Heathen nations, as were wholly without any knowledge of him; who had only the dim light of nature to guide them; had had no promises nor prophecies of the Messiah, nor so much as any hints, at least very distant ones, concerning him; and where as yet the sound of the Gospel had not reached:

lest I should build on another man’s foundation;

meaning not the law of Moses, nor the doctrines of the false teachers, but the foundation of the true apostles, and which was no other than the foundation Christ, he himself laid; but he chose not to go where they had laid the foundation by preaching Christ and his Gospel, that he might not take another man’s crown, or boast in another man’s line, or of other men’s labours; but rather to go where others had never been, that he might first lay the foundation himself, by preaching Christ, and him crucified, and so the more act up to his character as an apostle, and as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:21

But as it is written

In (Isaiah 52:15);

to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand;

for the Messiah was not spoken of to the Gentiles; they were strangers to the covenants of promise; the oracles of God were committed to the Jews; God gave his word and statutes to them, and not to any other nation: and yet, according to this prophecy, the Gentiles were to see him whom they had no account of; not in the flesh with their bodily eyes, in which sense only, or at least chiefly, the Jews saw him; but with the eyes of their understanding, by faith, as exhibited and evidently set forth before them as crucified, in the Gospel and the ordinances of it: and though they had heard nothing of him, having for many hundreds of years been left in ignorance, and suffered to walk in their own ways, until the apostles were sent among them; whose sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; yet when this would be the case, according to these words, they would understand the mind and will of God, the mysteries of his grace, the nature of the person and offices of Christ, the design of his coming into the world, and the way of salvation by him; all which was greatly brought about and accomplished, in the ministry of the Apostle Paul among them. The

passage is very pertinently cited and applied by the apostle. The whole paragraph is to be understood of the Messiah, from whence it is taken, as it is owned, and accordingly interpreted by many Jewish writers, both ancient F2 and modern F3; and these words particularly respect the kings and nations of the world, who are represented as struck with silence and wonder, when, upon the preaching and hearing of the Messiah, they should see him by faith, and spiritually understand what is declared concerning him. The difference between the apostle's version of these words, which is the same with the Septuagint, and the text in Isaiah, is very inconsiderable. The first clause of the Hebrew text may be literally rendered thus, "for him, who was not spoken of to them, they shall see"; and the apostle's Greek in this manner, to whom "it was not spoken of concerning him, they shall see"; the sense is the same, and person intended Christ: the latter clause, which we from the Hebrew text render, "and that which they had not heard, shall they consider"; and here, "they that have not heard, shall understand", has nothing material in it, in which they differ; for in the former part of it both design the Messiah, and the things concerning him, the Gentiles had not heard of; and the latter is rendered and explained by the Targum, and by R. Sol Jarchi, as by the apostle, (wlktoa) , "they shall understand"; and which fitly expresses the sense of the Hebrew word used by the prophet.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Targum in Isa. lii. 13. Pesikta in Kettoreth hassammim in Num. fol. 27. 2. Tanchuma apud Huls. Jud. Theolog. p. 321.

F3 Baal Hatturim in Lev. xvi. 14. R. Moses Aishech in Isa. lii. 13. Vid. R. Aben Ezra in ib.

Romans 15:22

For which cause also

By reason of being employed for so many years, in preaching the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum; taking so large a compass to minister in, and striving to introduce, propagate, and spread the Gospel, where Christ was never named before:

I have been much hindered from coming to you;

or he had been often, and by many ways, and upon many accounts, hindered from coming to them; the frequent calls to different and distant places, and the great work of preaching the Gospel in those dark

parts of the world, and settling churches there, which was upon his hands, prevented his giving them a visit at Rome, which he much and often desired: as in the preceding verses the apostle excuses his freedom of writing to this church, so here his long delay of coming to them, assigning the reason of it.

Romans 15:23

But now having no more place in these parts

Not because persecution was too hot for him, and therefore could not stay any longer, for this was what he expected everywhere; nor did it discourage him in his work, for he took pleasure in enduring it for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; but because he had fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, in his circuit to Illyricum, had filled every town and city with it, had planted churches in every place, and ordained elders over them, to whom the care and charge of them were committed; that there were no more places for him to preach in, but either where he himself had been already, or some other of the apostles; not but that he could have stayed with usefulness to these new formed churches, for the edifying and confirming of them, for the furtherance of the joy of faith in them, and for the defence of the Gospel and its ordinances among them; but his proper work as an apostle being to preach the Gospel to all nations, and where Christ was not named, and to plant churches; and there being no more room in these climates, or regions, for such service, he begins to think of some other places, particularly Spain, where as yet very probably the Gospel was not preached: however, he found himself at leisure to visit other places, and hereby gives the church at Rome some hopes of seeing him from this consideration, as well as from what follows:

and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

he had not only a desire, but a very vehement desire to come to them; he longed to see them, as he elsewhere says; so that since now he had leisure, they might hope it would not be long ere they did see him; especially as the thing had been upon his mind and thoughts for many years past; which shows that the Gospel had been preached very early at Rome, that many had been converted by it, and a church had been formed there some years ago, and was known to the apostle; on which account, having heard much of their faith and obedience, he had a longing desire of a great while to see them.

Romans 15:24

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain

Which he had now meditated and resolved upon, being a place, as before observed, where it is very likely the Gospel as yet had not been preached, which made him desirous of going thither; but whether he ever went thither, or not, is not certain; some think he never performed the intended journey; others affirm he did, some time between his two appearances before Nero. Sepharad, in (Obadiah 1:20) , is taken by the Jewish writers for this country; and is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra on that place, called (aympoa) , "Aspamia"; a name not greatly different from Hispania, by which it usually goes among the Greeks and Latins; but Kimchi calls it (aynpa) , "Spania", the very word used in this place, and by us rendered "Spain", as it is usually called: it was called "Span" in the language of the Celtic, who first inhabited it, which signifies a companion; it was formerly called Iberia, from the river Iberus; afterwards Hesperia, from Hesperus, the brother of Atlas; and then Hispalia, from the city Hispalis, or Sevil; and from thence corruptly Hispania; there are some that derive it from (spania) , from the roughness of some places in it, barren, uncultivated, and uninhabited: it has on the east the Pyrenean mountains, by which it is divided from France, on the west the Atlantic ocean, on the north the Cantabrian, and on the south the Herculean sea, and the straits of Gades: now as the apostle intended a journey into this country; he mentions it, in order to raise their expectations of seeing him; since in his way thither, he would have a fair opportunity of coming to them; yea, he assures them, that whenever he went thither, he would come:

I will come to you:

it was his real intention, a settled resolution and determination in his mind so to do; but whereas everything of this kind depends not upon the will of man, but upon the will and providence of God, and so many unforeseen things fall out which prevent the fulfilling of human purposes, therefore he adds,

for I trust,
or "hope"

to see you in my journey:

he could not be certain that he should see them, but he hoped he should, for nothing was more desirable to him; his wish was not to see their emperor, their senate, or their famous city, but them, the church of Christ

there; and a beautiful and delightful sight it is, to see a church of Christ in Gospel order, walking together in the faith and fellowship, and ordinances of it, and in peace one with another:

and to be brought on my way thitherward by you;

he not only hoped to see them, but that he should have the company of some of them along with him, in his way to Spain; from whose conversation he might expect much spiritual pleasure and refreshment; and by whom he might be directed in his way, as well as supplied with all necessaries for his journey; in which sense the phrase of bringing on in the way, is sometimes used; see (Titus 3:13) (3 John 1:6) ; though before he should depart from them, he hoped to have abundance of satisfaction in his conversation with them together as a church:

if first I be somewhat,

or in part,

filled with your company;

or with you, meaning that before he should set forward from them to Spain, that he should be greatly delighted with beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith, hearing their sweet experiences, and observing their holy life and conversation, and their peace and concord among themselves; not that he expected entire satisfaction, a satiety of pleasure, fulness of joy, which are only to be had in the presence of God, and communion with angels and glorified saints; though perhaps he might expect more than he had, for at his first answer before Nero, all these Romans forsook him and fled; saints are often disappointed in their raised expectations of what they shall enjoy in each other's company.

Romans 15:25

But now I go unto Jerusalem

Whither he was bound in spirit, not knowing what should befall him there, from which he could not be dissuaded by his friends, and thither he did go:

to minister unto the saints;

not to preach the Gospel, though doubtless he did that when he was there; but to distribute among the poor saints what had been raised for them by the Greek churches; who had entreated him to take upon him this service, even the fellowship of ministering to the saints; and though this might seem below his office as an apostle, and as what more became an inferior officer,

a deacon in a church; yet the apostle's heart was so much in it, and he was so bent upon it, and so diligent to execute it, that he postponed his journey to Spain and visit to Rome for the sake of it, and assigns this as a reason why he could not come at present.

Romans 15:26

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia

That is, the churches of Macedonia, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica; and the churches of Achaia, especially the church at Corinth, which was the metropolis of Achaia:

to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem;

of which contribution, of their great forwardness, readiness, and liberality, a large account is given in (2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15) ; from whence Origen and others have rightly concluded, that this epistle to the Romans was wrote after that; since in that the apostle exhorts and encourages them, by the example of the Macedonian churches, to finish the collection they had begun; which collection is here called a contribution, or "communion", as the word signifies; it being one part of the communion of churches and of saints, to relieve their poor, by communicating to them, and to assist each other therein; and in which they have not only fellowship with one another, but with Christ the head; who takes what is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself: the persons for whom the collection was made, are "the poor saints", or "the poor of the saints"; for not all the saints, but the poor among them, were the objects of this generosity: they were saints such as are sanctified by God the Father in eternal election, and by the blood of Christ in redemption, and by the Spirit of Christ in the effectual calling, to these this goodness extended; for though good is to be done to all men, yet more especially to the household of faith: they were "poor", which is the lot of many who are saints, whom God has chosen, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are called by grace: these came to be so, either through the great dearth which was throughout the world in the times of Claudius Caesar, when the brethren at Jerusalem particularly suffered, and were relieved by the disciples at Antioch; but this collection was made some years after that, and therefore rather they became so, through the persecutions of their countrymen; by whom they suffered joyfully the

spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had a better and more enduring substance in heaven; or else through their having sold all their possessions, and thrown their money into one common stock and fund, for mutual subsistence, which was now exhausted: these poor saints lived at Jerusalem, which was at a great distance from Macedonia and Achaia; but though they were strangers, and unknown by face to them, and had only heard of them, and their distress; yet this was no objection to their cheerful contribution; they considered them as members of the same body, as belonging to the same family, and as standing in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ with themselves; and upon this foot they acted; and what they did is worthy the imitation of all the churches and people of God.

Romans 15:27

It hath pleased them [verily]

This is repeated from the former verse, and is designed to point out the spring of this contribution, and the manner in which it was performed: it arose from themselves; it was the pure effect of their good will and pleasure; the first motion was from among themselves; it was their own thought, mind, and will; they were willing of themselves unto it, and begun it of themselves, unasked, and not moved unto it by any other: it was not done by constraint or necessity, but was entirely free; they did not make it for ostentation sake, or to gain the applause of men, but from a principle of love to the poor saints; and which showed itself to be sincere, hearty, and genuine, by deeds, and not bare words: they performed this service with great alacrity and cheerfulness; they gave not sparingly, but largely; it was not a matter of covetousness, but of bounty; and they did it not grudgingly, but cheerfully; they took delight and pleasure in it; their hearts and souls were in it, and yet notwithstanding did but what they ought to do.

And their debtors they are;

for being debtors to God for their temporal and spiritual mercies; and to Christ for what he has done for them in redemption, and for what he is to them; and to the Spirit for the influences and operations of his grace upon them, they are debtors to the saints; they are bound to love them; they owe the debt of love to them, as they are in the spiritual relation of the children of God, members of Christ, and brethren one of another; and their paying of this debt to them is, in some sense,

reckoned a paying it to the divine persons. Moreover, it was not merely a debt of love which these Gentiles owed, and in this way paid to the believing Jews; but it was a debt of justice and equity; they had received what was of valuable consideration from them, and by their means: Christ himself was of the Jews; hence salvation is said to be of them, (John 4:22) . The writings of the Old Testament were committed to them, and faithfully preserved by them; and from them transmitted to the Gentiles; the apostles were all Jews, under whose ministry they were enlightened, converted, and brought to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; the Gospel of the grace of God came out from among them; it was first preached in Judea, and at Jerusalem; and from thence was carried and spread in the Gentile world; yea, it looks very likely, and is not at all unreasonable to suppose, that the charge of carrying and spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles was at first defrayed by the believing Jews, and out of that common stock and fund which was at Jerusalem; for it was not proper that the apostles, at their first setting out, should take anything of the Gentiles, lest they should be thought to be mercenary persons, who only sought their own worldly advantage: hence the apostle argues from the greater to the lesser,

for if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things:

the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are spiritual things; contain and make known spiritual blessings; impart spiritual gifts; in which the Spirit of God is greatly concerned, he is the author of them; he leads men into them; qualifies them to preach them unto others; blesses and succeeds them to the conversion; comfort, and edification of souls; and by means of which he himself is received as a Spirit of illumination, sanctification, and faith: and which doctrines also relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls and spirits of men; hereby they are enlightened, quickened, comforted, and nourished up unto eternal life: wherefore, since this is the case, and these the favours the Gentiles enjoyed through the Jews,

their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things;

in outward and temporal things; in things pertaining to the flesh; or outward man, for the clothing and nourishment of the body. This he said to stir up the Romans, who were Gentiles also, and under the same obligations to make a contribution for them likewise.

Romans 15:28

When therefore I have performed this

Meaning when he had dispatched that business, and finished that affair which the Macedonian and Achaian churches had entreated him to engage in, and which he had undertook; namely, to take their collection, and carry it to Jerusalem, and distribute it among the poor saints there; and which he expresses by another phrase,

and have sealed to them this fruit.

The liberality of the Gentile churches is called fruit, as it may be on many accounts; as with respect to the apostle, it was the fruit of his ministry and laborious preaching of the Gospel among them; he had been sowing the seed of the word, and planting churches in these parts; and among other fruits brought forth hereby, as the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, the exercise of grace, and performance of good works, this of liberality to the poor saints was one: with respect to the persons, the objects of this bounty, it was the fruit of their spiritual things, which the Gentiles, by their means, had been partakers of; and would be as fruit, useful and profitable to them, to relieve their wants, supply them with necessaries, and make their lives more comfortable: and also with respect to the contributors, it was the fruit of the Spirit of God, and his grace in them; it was the fruit of faith, which works by love; and it was the fruit of their love to Christ, and to his saints; and was profitable to them in things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; promises of each being made and performed to such that sow liberally and bountifully. Now the ministration of this to the poor saints at Jerusalem, and on the behalf of the Grecian churches, the apostle calls a "sealing" it to them; and it is thought to be an allusion to the delivery of money sealed up, that it may not be lost, nor made use of for any other purpose than that for which it was designed: whether the apostle carried this collection sealed or not, it matters not; his sense is, that he should deliver it whole and safe unto them, and in such manner as to leave no suspicion that he had converted any part of it to his own use; though the word here used seems to answer to the Hebrew (סָתַם) , which, with the Jews, frequently signifies to conclude, "finish", and make an end of anything, as well as to "seal"; the sealing up of letters being the last and finishing part of them. Innumerable instances might be given; take the following one as a proof F4:

we find in the former prophets, (Nymtwx

wyhy) , “that they sealed”, or ended their words with words of praise, or with words of consolation Says R. Eliezer, except Jeremiah, (שְׁחַחַם) , “who sealed”, or finished with words of reproof.”

So the word is used in (Daniel 9:24) , and then the apostle’s plain meaning is, when I have made an end of this affair, have finished this business of ministering and distributing to the poor saints at Jerusalem,

I will come by you into Spain.

The Ethiopic version reads it, “Lasitania”, designing, no doubt, Lusitania, which was formerly a part of Spain, now called Portugal. Whether the apostle ever was there is not certain nor very probable, since when he came to Jerusalem he was apprehended, and after sometime sent a prisoner to Rome, where he suffered; however, it was his intention to go to Spain, and to take Rome in his way thither.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4.

Romans 15:29

And I am sure when I come to you

He intended to go to Spain; he was not sure he should reach thither; but he was positive in it he should come to Rome. It had been much and long upon his mind; and under an impress of the Spirit of God upon him, he had signified some time before this, that after he had been at Jerusalem, he “must see, Rome also”, (Acts 19:21) , and it was afterwards more expressly told him by the Lord, that as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, he should bear witness at Rome also, (Acts 23:11) , and therefore he was fully assured he should come to Rome, and was as confident of the manner of his coming thither.

I shall come in,
or “with”

the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ;

with the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Christ; and which must make him a welcome person to every sensible soul wherever he came; to this he was chosen, separated, and called; for this he was abundantly qualified; this was committed to his trust, and which he carried with him wherever he went: and he was not ashamed of it, and was ready to preach it even at Rome also. With “the Gospel of Christ”; not his own, or another’s, or any man’s, but Christ’s, which he had by

the revelation of Christ; of which Christ is the sum and substance, and which Christ himself preached; “with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ”. Some by “blessing” understand a liberal contribution, which he trusted he should make at Rome, for the poor saints at Jerusalem; believing that their hearts would be opened, under the preaching of the Gospel, to give freely to them, and that this would be a blessing that would attend it: but rather he means, either the blessed gifts he had, qualifying him for preaching the Gospel, with which he should come and deliver it among them, and which would attend it with success; such as boldness of spirit, freedom of speech, enlarged knowledge, mighty signs and wonders, and the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: or the blessed effects it would have on them, in establishing them in the present truths; in further enlightening and instructing their minds; in edifying, quickening, and comforting them; and in nourishing up with the words of faith and sound doctrine, unto eternal life: or the blessings of grace exhibited and set forth in the Gospel; such as justification and forgiveness of sins, peace and reconciliation, salvation and eternal life. Nay, he believed he should come in, or with the “fulness” of all this; meaning, either that he believed he should find them full of the Gospel, and the fruits of it; or rather that he should come full fraught with it, and fully preach it to them, and keep back thing that would be profitable. There is a fulness in the Gospel; it is full of the deep things of God, which the Spirit searches and reveals, (1 Corinthians 2:10) ; it is full of the doctrines of grace and truth, which Christ himself is said to be full of, (John 1:14) : it is full of exceeding great and precious promises transcribed from Christ, and out of the covenant of grace; and it is full of a variety of food, of milk for babes, (Hebrews 5:13) , and meat for strong persons, (Hebrews 5:14) . The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read only, “with the fulness of the blessing of Christ”; and so the Ethiopic version.

Romans 15:30

Now I beseech you, brethren

Having declared his intention of coming to them, and his confidence of it, he entreats an interest in their prayers; and which he urges from the consideration of their mutual relation as “brethren”; and therefore should love one another, and show it, among other things, by praying for each other to their common parent, in whom they have a joint interest, saying, as

directed by Christ, “our Father which art in heaven”, (Matthew 5:45) ; thereby signifying, that they prayed not for themselves only, but for all the brethren, all the children of God: and this the apostle further urges,

for Christ’s sake;

whose servant he was, and in whose cause he was engaged, whose Gospel he preached, and whose glory he sought; and therefore, if they had any regard for Christ, and the good of his interest, he beseeches them that they would pray for the continuance of his life and usefulness; since for him to live was for the good of the churches of Christ, though for him to die would be his own personal gain: and which he also stirs them up to,

for the love of the Spirit;

meaning either the love of the Father, and of the Son, which was shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which he had directed them into, and they had a comfortable sensation of; or that love to God, to Christ, and one another, which the Spirit of God had wrought in them in regeneration; or that love with which the Spirit of God equally loved them, as the Father, and the Son; and which he had shown in their conversion and sanctification, in applying all grace unto them, and indwelling in them as the Spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly inheritance.

That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

The apostle prayed for himself, as he had been wont to do ever since he was a converted man; but knowing well the force of united social prayer, he desires the assistance of others. He represents prayer as an agony, an holy conflict, and striving with God, a wrestling with him, as Jacob did, who held him, and would not let him go without the blessing, and had power with him, and prevailed. The phrase denotes the fervency of prayer, the strength, labour, and energy of it; see (Colossians 4:12) ; and also intimates, that the apostle foresaw he should have a combat with many enemies where he was going, and should be in great danger by them; and therefore desires they would join him in the use of their spiritual armour, and in that particular part of it, prayer, which has been often used to good purpose against the enemies of the Gospel: he does not desire these Romans to beg the assistance of their senate or emperor: but to pray to God for him, and join with him in their prayers to him, who is a God hearing prayer, and able to save. The petitions he would have them put up to him, are as

follow:

Romans 15:31

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea

By whom some think are meant such, who, though they believed in Jesus as the Messiah, yet were violently set against the apostle for preaching down the ceremonial law; and from whom he foresaw he should be in much danger when he came to Jerusalem, and therefore desires the church at Rome to pray for his deliverance from them; though rather such who did not believe in Jesus Christ at all are designed; and who were enemies to the Gospel, and to all Gospel ministers, but especially to the Apostle Paul, for preaching among the Gentiles, and such doctrines as he did, which struck at their peculiar notions; and, as he feared, he should be set upon by them, and his life be in great danger, so it was; see (Acts 21:27-31) ; though he was not disheartened and intimidated, and did not shun going up to Jerusalem, though entreated not to go; yet he thought proper to engage the churches of Christ in prayer for him, that he might be delivered out of the hands of such wicked and unreasonable men, who being destitute of faith in Christ, were filled with enmity against his ministers; see (2 Thessalonians 3:1 2 Thessalonians 3:2) ;

and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints;

that is, that the collection which was made by the Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the ministration of which unto them he had took upon him, might be cheerfully and gratefully received by them. One would think there were no fear of this, nor any need to pray for it; for if they were poor, and in necessitous circumstances, as they were, they would be glad of relief, and thankfully accept it: but the case was this, and the difficulties attending this service were, that this collection came from the Gentiles, to whom the Jews had an aversion, and was brought to them by one that they had entertained an ill opinion of, being informed that he had taught the Gentiles to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, or walk after the customs; wherefore he did not know whether, though in necessity, anything coming for their relief from such a quarter, and through his hands, would be received with any pleasure by them: besides, his desire was that it might be received as a token of the true and sincere love the Gentiles bore to them; and be a means

of reconciling the believing Jews to them, to own them as sister churches of the same faith and order with themselves.

Romans 15:32

That I may come unto you with joy

The end the apostle had, in desiring them to request the above things at the throne of grace for him, was, that he might come to them, which unless he was delivered from the unbelieving Jews, could not be; and therefore since they had an interest in this matter, he might hope they would be the more importunate in their supplications for him, the he might escape their hands; and seeing also, should the saints there use him in an ungrateful manner, and slight the kindness of the Gentile churches, and his service should not have the desired effect, his coming to them would be with sorrow: wherefore he puts them upon praying for success in this affair, that so when he came among them he should have no uneasiness upon his mind, or, anything of this kind to distress him, and interrupt that pleasure and delight he promised himself in their company and conversation: he adds,

by the will of God:

resigning himself, and submitting all things to the sovereign will of God, and the wise disposals of his providence: he knew his deliverance from his enemies must be by, and the success of his services owing to, and his coming to Rome entirely according to, the will of God, and as he should think fit and proper; so he acted himself, and so he taught these believers to have their regard to, and sit down contented with the will of God in all things; to which he subjoins,

and may with you be refreshed;

with the presence of God among them, with the Gospel in the fulness and blessing of it with which he should come and with the mutual faith and comfortable experience of him and them, which they should communicate to each other; than all which nothing is more reviving, and refreshing to the spirits of God's people.

Romans 15:33

Now the God of peace be with you all, Amen.

] As God is in this chapter before styled the God of patience, (Romans 15:5) , and the God of hope, (Romans 15:13) , because of his concern in these graces;

so he is here styled “the God of peace”, because of his concern in that peace which is made between him and his people, by the blood of Christ. This peace was first upon his thoughts, which are therefore called thoughts of peace; a council of peace was held between him and his Son upon this head; the scheme of reconciliation was drawn by him in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, which takes its name from this momentous article of it; he appointed Christ to be the peacemaker, and laid on him the chastisement of our peace; and it pleased him by him to reconcile all things to himself, (Colossians 1:20) . Moreover, he is so called because he is the giver of all true solid conscience peace, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding of natural men; and which when he gives, none can give trouble; and is what he fills his people with in a way of believing, leading their faith to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his Son. He is also the author of happiness and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and likewise of all the peace and concord which is in his churches, and among his saints; so that when the apostle wishes that the God of peace might be with them, he not only prays that the presence of God might be with them; but that they might have fresh views of their interest in peace, made by the blood of Christ; that they might enjoy peace in their own consciences, arising from thence; that they might be possessed of felicity of every kind, and that unity and harmony might subsist among them; that the peace of God might rule in their hearts, and they live in love and peace one with another, laying aside all their differences as Jews and Gentiles, about the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses; to which the apostle may have a particular respect in this concluding wish of his, and here indeed properly the epistle ends; the following chapter being as a sort of postscript, filled up with salutations and recommendations of particular persons; wherefore the word “Amen” is placed here, though it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 16

This chapter contains a recommendation of a single person, herein mentioned; a list of the chief of the saints at Rome, who are saluted by name, and some with singular encomiums; a caution to beware of false teachers; various salutations of persons that were with the apostle sent to the church at Rome; and the whole is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God. First, a commendation is given of a woman, by whom this long letter was sent, who is described by

her name, Phebe; by her spiritual relation, a sister in Christ; by her office or character, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, Ro 16:1 , who is recommended to the saints at Rome, to receive her into their communion, conversation, and affection, as became them, and to assist her in every thing she might need from them; which is enforced by this reason, because she had been a succourer of the apostle, and many others, Ro 16:2 , and next follows a catalogue of the principal saints at Rome, to whom the apostle sends his Christian salutations; and among these stand, in the first place, Aquila and Priscilla, and the church in their house, Ro 16:3-5 , who are described as greatly assisting to him in the cause of Christ, and as having a strong affection for him; which they showed by risking their lives on his account, for which he gives them thanks, as did all the churches: Secondly, Epaphroditus is next saluted, as having a great interest in the apostle's affections, and as being one of the first converts in Achaia, Ro 16:5 . Thirdly, a woman named Mary, who did her utmost to serve the apostle, and those that were with him, Ro 16:6 . Fourthly, a couple of saints, Andronicus, and Junia, described by their relation to the apostle, his kinsmen; by their sufferings with him, fellow prisoners; by the fame and credit they were in among the Christians of the first rank, even the apostles; and by their early conversion, being converted before the apostle himself, Ro 16:7 . Fifthly, next in the list is Amplias, who is saluted as in the Lord, and as beloved in him, Ro 16:8 . Sixthly, two worthy men are joined together, Urban and Stachys; the one is saluted as an helper in Christ, and the other as beloved by the apostle, Ro 16:9 . Seventhly, Apelles is next named, and commended as one approved in Christ. Eighthly, the family of Aristobulus is greeted, Ro 16:10 . Ninthly, a kinsman of the apostle's, by name Herodion: and, Tenthly, the household of Narcissus, said to be in the Lord, Ro 16:11 . Eleventhly, two excellent women are greeted, who had been indefatigable in the service of Christ: and, Twelfthly, another woman, by name Persis, a person to be respected and loved, on account of her labour in the Lord, Ro 16:12 . Thirteenthly, Rufus is saluted as one chosen in Christ, and also his mother, and who was the mother of the apostle, Ro 16:13 . Fourteenthly, five of the saints are joined together, who are mentioned by name, and other brethren with them, whose names are not set down, Ro 16:14 , and, Lastly, five other saints, with all the brethren with them, are likewise saluted, Ro 16:15 , and these, and all the members of the church, are exhorted to salute one

another in an affectionate and chaste manner, who are told that all the churches saluted them, Ro 16:16 , then follows the exhortation to take care of false teachers, to mark them, and avoid them; who are described as schismatics and heretics, making divisions in the church, and preaching contrary to the Gospel taught and learned, Ro 16:17 . The arguments or reasons made use of to enforce the exhortation, are taken partly from the characters of these teachers, being selfish men, who served not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies; and deceivers, who by smooth words and plausible doctrines imposed upon simple minds, Ro 16:18 , and partly from the characters of the saints at Rome, who were simple and credulous, and ready to give in to everything that carried an appearance of truth; and though they were to be commended for their ready obedience to the Gospel, yet it became them to mingle wisdom and prudence with their simplicity and readiness to receive what appeared to be truth, Ro 16:19 , and from a promise of victory over Satan and his emissaries in a short time; to which the apostle annexes his usual salutation, and “Amen”, as if he had concluded the epistle, Ro 16:20 , but adds various salutations of persons that were with him, who desired to be remembered to the brethren at Rome, as Timotheus a fellow worker, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, his kinsmen, Ro 16:21 , Tertius the writer of the epistle, Ro 16:22 , Gaius the host of the apostle, and of the whole church; Erastus, chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and Quartus a brother, Ro 16:23 , and then the apostle repeats the above salutation, Ro 16:24 , and yet still has not finished his epistle, but concludes with a doxology, Ro 16:25-27 , in which is celebrated the power of God, in establishing his people according to the Gospel, commended by its being the preaching of Christ, and the revelation of the mystery hid from ages past; and the goodness of God is also taken notice of, in giving orders to make it manifest, and in making it manifest to the Gentiles, in order to bring them to the obedience of faith; and likewise the wisdom of God is observed, to whom wisdom alone belongs, and which is apparent in the Gospel before mentioned, and in all the methods of his grace, as well as providence; and glory to him, through Christ for ever, is wished and prayed for; and so ends this excellent and valuable epistle.

ROMANS CHAPTER 16

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints,

and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY ROMANS CHAPTER 16

Romans 16:1

I commend unto you Phebe our sister

This chapter chiefly consists of commendations and salutations of persons, and begins with the former. It was usual to give letters of commendation of a member of one church to those of another; see (2 Corinthians 3:1) ; The person who is here recommended was, as appears from the subscription of this epistle, if that may be depended on, the bearer of this letter, and is described by her name, Phebe; as she dwelt at Cenchrea, it is probable she was a Grecian, as is her name. Pausanias F5 makes frequent mention of one of this name in Greece. With the Heathen poets, Pheobus was the sun, and Phoebe the moon. Though it is not unlikely that she might be a Jewess, since there were many of them in those parts; and this was a name in use among them. We often read F6 of R. Ishmael (ybap Nb) , “ben Phoebi”, which I take to be the same name with this. She is recommended as a sister, “our sister”; not in a natural, but spiritual relation; one that was a member of the church at Cenchrea, and in full communion with it; for as it was usual to call the men brethren, it was common to call the women sisters. Elderly men were called fathers, younger men brethren; elderly women were styled mothers, and younger women sisters, who were partakers of the grace of God, and enjoyed the fellowship of the saints:

which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.

This place was a seaport of the Corinthians, distant from Corinth about seventy furlongs, or eight or nine miles: it was on one side of the Isthmus, as Lechea was on the other F7; (See Gill on Acts 18:18). In the way to this place from the Isthmus, as Pausanias relates F8, was the temple of Diana, and a very ancient sculpture; and in Cenchrea itself was the temple of Venus, and a wooden image; and near the flow of the sea was a Neptune of brass. But now, in this place, was a church of Jesus Christ; and since it was so near to Corinth, it shows that churches in those early times were not national, or provincial, but congregational. Of this church Phebe was a servant, or, as the word signifies, a minister or deacon; not that she was a teacher of the word, or preacher of the Gospel, for that was not allowed of by the apostle in the church at Corinth, that a woman should teach; see (1 Corinthians 14:34 1 Corinthians 14:35) ; and therefore would never be admitted at Cenchrea. Rather, as some think, she was a deaconess appointed by the church, to take care of the poor sisters of the church; though as they were usually poor, and ancient women; that were put into that service, and this woman, according to the account of her, being neither poor, nor very ancient; it seems rather, that being a rich and generous woman, she served or ministered to the church by relieving the poor; not out of the church's stock, as deaconesses did, but out of her own substance; and received the ministers of the Gospel, and all strangers, into her house, which was open to all Christians; and so was exceeding serviceable to that church, and to all the saints that came thither: though it is certain that among the ancient Christians there were women servants who were called ministers. Pliny, in an epistle of his to Trajan the emperor, says F9, that he had examined two maids, “quae ministrae dicebantur”, “who were called ministers”, to know the truth of the Christian religion.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Graec. Descript. l. 2. p. 125. l. 3. p. 190. l. 4. p. 276.

F6 Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. & 35. 2. Jucbasin, fol. 24. 2. & 54. 2.

F7 Plin. Natural Hist. l. 4. c. 4. Ptolem. l. 3. c. 16.

F8 in Corinthiacis, p. 88.

F9 Epist. l. 10. ep. 97.

Romans 16:2

That ye receive her in the Lord

This is one thing he recommends her to them for,

that they would receive her in a kind and friendly manner into their houses, and into their hearts' love and affections; admit her to their private meetings, and into church fellowship with them, and that as one that was in the Lord, and belonged to him; and also in his name, and for his sake:

as becometh saints;

that is, both that they would treat her with that humanity, courteousness, Christian affection, and respect, as became them who were saints by calling and profession; and that they would use her as being one of the saints, a godly, holy person, and as such an one ought to be used, by virtue of the communion of saints:

and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:

what her business was at Rome is not known; whether it was only to visit the saints; or whether it was to have a cause tried in any court of judicature there; or whether she came upon worldly business, as Lydia of Thyatira was at Philippi to sell her purple, when the Apostle Paul was there, it matters not: whatever assistance they could give her, either by directing her where the saints lived; or by giving her proper counsel and advice; or helping her forward in her worldly affairs; or whatever she was concerned in, this is desired; and is another thing for which the apostle recommends her to them, adding this reason,

for she hath been a succourer of many;

or “a patroness of many” of the saints in necessity and distress. The word that is here used, (prostathv) , is, as Harpocratian says F11 the name by which such were called by the Athenians, (oi twn metoikwn proesthkutev) , “that were over the sojourners”, who had the care and direction of them. And such was this woman to the poor saints in Cenchrea, and the strangers that came thither; not as being in such an office by the order and appointment of the church, but what she cheerfully and voluntarily took up herself and performed at her own expense, otherwise there would not be so much in the character as to deserve such peculiar notice, nor she be so worthy of praise and commendation: moreover, the apostle observes, that he also partook of her succour and assistance,

and of myself also;

which would hardly have been the case had she been one that had only the care of the poor sisters of the church, which was the office of the deaconess: but she

being a rich generous woman, and the apostle having shared in her bounty, gratefully acknowledges it; and he the rather mentions it, as knowing it would the more endear her to the saints at Rome, who would take more notice of her for the respect she had shown to him.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Lexic. decem Orator. p. 255.

Romans 16:3

Greet Priscilla and Aquila

The former of these, who was a woman, and the wife of the latter, is in some copies called Prisca; and so the Vulgate Latin here reads it, as she is also called in (2 Timothy 4:19) . Her being named before her husband, is without design, for sometimes he is put before her, as in (Acts 18:2 Acts 18:26) (1 Corinthians 16:19) . And it is a rule with the Jews F12, that there is neither first nor last in the Scriptures; that is, strict order is not always observed; it is sometimes inverted, find nothing depends upon it: hence the reasons assigned by some, that she was first converted, or had more zeal than her husband, are uncertain and impertinent. She is called Priscilla in the Ethiopic version, as he is in the Arabic, Achilles: he was a Jew of Pontus, and was with his wife drove out of Rome by Claudius Caesar, when with her he went to Corinth, where he met with the Apostle Paul; and they being of the same craft, abode and wrought together at their trade of tent making; and when the apostle removed from thence, they went with him, and were with him at Ephesus; where, meeting with Apollos, who, though an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet being in some things deficient these two took him unto them, in a private way, and taught him the way of God's salvation more perfectly, (Acts 18:24-26) : where they left the apostle is not certain; but either Claudius being dead, or the edict which ordered the Jews to depart from Rome being revoked, or not regarded, they returned thither again; and were here when the apostle wrote this epistle, and whom he salutes, calling them

my helpers in Christ Jesus;

in spreading the Gospel, and promoting the kingdom, honour, and interest of Christ; for though they did not publicly preach, at least not Priscilla, yet they were very useful in their private conferences and instructions, both to ministers of the Gospel, as in the case of Apollos, and to young Christians: as the apostle,

wherever he went, was instrument of the conversion of many souls; these were helpful privately in encouraging the young converts, comforting them with their own experiences and thereby helped them forward, instructed, strengthened, and established them; and so were greatly assistant to the apostle in the work of the Lord Jesus.

FOOTNOTES:

F12 T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 3.

Romans 16:4

Who for my life laid down their necks

That is, exposed themselves to great danger to save the apostle's life: the allusion is to the manner of executions by beheading, and to one person's laying down his head, and offering his neck to the executioner the room of another: this we are not to suppose was literally done; but the design of the expression is, that in some shape or another they risked their own lives for the apostle's; which might be done either at the insurrection in Corinth against Paul, when the Jews dragged him to the judgment seat of Gallio, and beat Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue before him; or the uproar in Ephesus by Demetrius and the craftsmen, when Paul and his companions were in great danger; at both which times and places these two persons were, and being very zealous, were no doubt active to preserve the apostle, and which he acknowledges with thankfulness:

unto whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles;

both for the care they took of him, and the danger they exposed themselves to on his account; which the apostle expresses his sense of gratitude for, and which all the Gentile churches were under obligations to do likewise, since they had a common share in his labours and usefulness, he was the apostle of them all; and also for their help and assistance in carrying on the work of the Lord in all the churches of the Gentiles.

Romans 16:5

Likewise greet the church that is in their house

Which was either their own family, which might be somewhat large, and consisting entirely or chiefly of religious persons; for when they were in other places they had a church in their house as well as Rome; see (1 Corinthians 16:19) ; or the saints at Rome, who used to meet privately at their house, and pray and sing

praises together, speak to one another of the things of God, and build up one another in their most faith; and from their gathering together in the name of Christ, and for the worship of him, and among whom his presence, according to his promise, was, they are called a church, or an assembly of Christians.

Salute my well beloved Epaenetus;

for though all the saints were beloved by the apostle, yet there were some, as this good man, for whom he might have, on some account or another, a particular affection; as our Lord, as man, had for his disciple John, though he loved all his disciples. There is one of this name, said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Carthage; (See Gill on Luke 10:1).

Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ;

that is, either he was one of the chief and principal for gifts and grace, or one of the first that was converted to Christ in those parts: the allusion is to the firstfruits under the law, which were offered unto the Lord, and were pledges of, and sanctified the rest. The Vulgate Latin, instead of Achaia, reads "Asia": and so it is read in the Alexandrian copy, and others: the reason of this different reading seems to be, because the house of Stephanas are said to be the firstfruits of Achaia, (1 Corinthians 16:15) . But this hinders not but that Epaenetus might be so too, for he might be one of the family of Stephanas, who was now removed to Rome. If he was a Jew, his Jewish name might be Judah, the same with Epaenetus, in Greek.

Romans 16:6

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

] Some copies read, "you"; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: and indeed it seems most likely that the persons on whom this good woman bestowed so much labour, and to whom she was so very serviceable, were the saints at Rome, where she lived, rather than the apostle and his companions; not but that she might have been in some parts where she had met with him, and his friends, and had been very indefatigable in assisting and supplying them, in a very generous and liberal manner, with all the necessaries of life; and was exceeding useful in encouraging the ministers of the Gospel, and in promoting the interest of Christ. Her name Mary is the same with Miriam in Hebrew; whether she was of Jewish extract is not certain, and who she was is not known: some have conjectured

her to be the same that Ignatius wrote an epistle to; not Mary of Castabilis, but of Naples, who was at Rome in the time of Linus, the Latin version reads "Cletus", and of Clement, on whom he bestows very great characters; calling her most faithful, worthy of God, and a bearer of Christ, and in all things wise F13: and in another letter F14 of his he represents her as exceeding learned, an exemplar of godly women, and having a church in her house. But both these epistles are thought, by learned men, to be falsely ascribed to him, and so not to be depended on.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Ignat. Epist. ad Mariam, p. 69, 70.

F14 lb. ad Heronem, p. 97. Ed. Voss.

Romans 16:7

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen

According to the flesh, being perhaps not only of the same nation, Jews, but also of the same tribe, the tribe of Benjamin, and even of the same family, and might be nearly allied in blood. And though the apostle did not value himself upon his carnal descent, yet he had a very great value and affection for his relations after the flesh, even though they were only of the same nation; see (Romans 9:3) ; and especially for such as were partakers of the grace of God, as these his kinsmen were. These were their Gentile names, the one Greek, the other Latin; but both were Jews. Grotius thinks that their Jewish names were, the one Masinissa, and the other Naarah; and that the latter was the wife of the former, but they rather seem both to be men; Junia should be read Junias, a contraction of Junilius:

and my fellow prisoners;

either at Philippi, or in some other place; for though we read only of the apostle's being in prison at that place, and at Rome, yet it is certain from his own account, (2 Corinthians 11:23) ; that he was frequently imprisoned; and Clement of Rome says, he was seven times in bonds F15, at one of which times these were bound with him, but when and where is not known. This is a greater character of them, and a greater honour to them, than to be called his kinsmen after the flesh:

who are of note among the apostles;

were well known by, and in great account with the twelve apostles, though not of their number; they might be converted by them, and be followers of them in Judea; they are thought by some to be of the number

of the seventy disciples, whom Christ himself sent forth to preach: Andronicus particularly is mentioned among them, and said to be bishop of Pannonia, or rather of Spain; (See Gill on 10:1); however, they might be preachers of the Gospel, and be persons of great fame and renown as such; for which reason they might be called apostles, that being a name sometimes given to ordinary ministers of the word, and to such who were messengers of the churches, (2 Corinthians 8:23) , as these might be, and were famous for their prudent, faithful, and diligent discharge of their office and duty:

who also were in Christ before me;

which is to be understood, not of their secret being in Christ, as being loved by him, chosen in him, given to him, and represented by him in the covenant of grace; for they had not a place in Christ's heart, or a share in his love before him; wherefore the Arabic version is not only a bad one, but carries a false sense in it; which renders the clause thus, "who were in the love of Christ before me": nor were they chosen in Christ before him, for all the elect were chosen together in him before the foundation of the world; nor were they given to him, put into his hands, and made his care and charge before him; nor were they considered in Christ as their covenant head before him; Christ became their surety for them together, and received grace, blessings, and promises for them, and they in him before the world began; and was their common head and representative in time, in their nature; and they were all together crucified, buried, and raised with him, and set down with him in heavenly places together. But they were in the profession of faith, and in the church of Christ, and in the ministry of the word before him, being converted and brought to the faith of Christ before he was; which is the saints' open being in Christ, and is the effect and evidence of their being secretly in him from everlasting: this is to be created in Christ, or made new creatures in him; to be brought to believe in him, and even into him for righteousness, pardon, peace, acceptance, and eternal life, which are in him; and to live upon him, and in him, and derive all light and life, grace and strength, joy, peace, and comfort from him, as the branch derives its sap and nourishment from the vine, in which it is; and in this sense these men were in Christ before the apostle; they were converted persons, professors of religion, members of a church, and Gospel ministers before him: and though this is nothing in the business of salvation, who is called first or last; the one is equally as safe and

as happy as the other; the thief that was called at the last hour, and the last man that will be called by grace in the world; yet it is a great blessing and mercy to be converted early; hereby a multitude of sins is prevented, and more, service done for Christ. And doubtless the apostle had this in view, and therefore gives these his kinsmen the preference to himself, that whilst he was a blasphemer of Christ, a persecutor of his people, and injurious to his interest, these made a profession of his name, preached his Gospel, and served his cause: it shows also, that they were persevering Christians, were pillars in the house of God, and never went out; and on account of their constancy and long standing, were worthy of respect. The apostle rises gradually in the character of these persons; as it was more to be fellow prisoners with him than to be his kinsmen, so it was more to be of note among the apostles, or to be eminent preachers of the Gospel, than to be fellow prisoners with him; and it was more to be in Christ than them all, than to be Paul's kinsmen, fellow prisoners with him, or to be known and approved of by the apostles, to be messengers of churches, preachers of the word, or even to be apostles themselves, and the chiefest of them; for such are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, are complete and perfect in him, are safe and secure, and can never perish; and being once in Christ, are always in him, and will be found in him living and dying, and at judgment.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Epist. ad Corinth. p. 14.

Romans 16:8

Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

] This was a Roman name; the Vulgate Latin reads "Ampliatius", and so do the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version: some call him "Amphias", and "Amphiatus", and say, but whether on good authority I will not affirm, that this man was bishop of Odyssus; but be he who he will, the apostle had a singular affection for him; and that not upon any external account, as natural relation, riches, honour, learning but for the Lord's sake, and as he was in Christ, a member of him, and so in a spiritual relation to the apostle; a "brother" of his, as the Ethiopic version here calls him; and because he was honoured with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and for his usefulness in the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

Romans 16:9

Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ

This also was a Roman name, and which many of the popes of Rome have since taken to themselves; he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and to be a bishop in Macedonia; (See Gill on Luke 10:1); which is not very probable: others have conjectured him to be one of the pastors of the church of Rome, which is more likely; and if he was, but few of his successors have deserved the character given of him, an "helper in Christ"; in spreading the Gospel, and enlarging the kingdom and interest of Christ:

and Stachys my beloved;

this is a Greek name, he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Byzantium; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). According to the Roman martyrology, he was ordained bishop of the Byzantine church, by Andrew the apostle, but this is not to be depended on; he was, however, because of his faith in Christ, and love to him, or on such like spiritual accounts, very dear to the apostle.

Romans 16:10

Salute Apelles approved in Christ

Origen was in doubt whether this was not the same person with Apollos the Alexandrian Jew, whom Aquila and Priscilla met with at Ephesus; but had he been intended, the apostle would doubtless have said more of him, he being so eminent and remarkable a preacher of the Gospel; though indeed the character here given is very considerable; besides, Apollos did not live at Rome, though it was not impossible he might be there at this time. The name seems to be a Greek one, there was a famous painter of this name in Greece; though it was also used among the Jews, and this person here might possibly, be a Jew; for Horace F16 speaks of one of this name, when he says, "credat Judaeus Apella"; by whom he means, not, as many have thought, a circumcised Jew in general, but a particular person, a Jew of that name: but it is of no importance whether he was a Jew or a Gentile; some say he was one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Smyrna; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). However, he was one that was approved in Christ; approved of God in Christ, who approves of none but in Christ; not of any on account of their own commendations, or those of others; for not he that commendeth himself is approved of God, nor whom others commend; and oftentimes what is highly esteemed of men, is abominable in the sight of God; nor does he approve

of any on the score of their own works and duties, or as in themselves considered, whose righteousness in as filthy rags, and they themselves polluted and unclean; but as in Christ his well beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, and with all in him; and so God's elect are, as this man was approved of in him the beloved, even in his own Son, in whom both persons and services are accepted: moreover he was approved of by Christ, and that from eternity, as presented to him in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees; and in time, as adorned with his own grace, and clothed with his justifying righteousness, and as faithfully serving him in his day and generation: he was also proved to be in Christ; he had proved it to himself, to his own satisfaction, by observing, upon self-examination, that Christ was in him; and he had made it to appear to others, by his faith in Christ, love to him, zeal for him, and close attachment to his Gospel, against all errors and heresies, whereby they are approved are made manifest; and that in the face of all opposition and persecution: he was tried and proved, and so approved by a variety of tribulations and afflictions; his faith remained firm, and he abode by the interest of a Redeemer; and so he was tried, or proved, as the Arabic version renders it, "in the religion of Christ"; in which he was sincere, upright, and faithful; his faith was unfeigned, his love without dissimulation, he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile: if a preacher of the word, he did not corrupt it, but in sincerity, and as in the sight of God and Christ, spoke it; and if only a private believer, he was one that desired the sincere milk of the word, and was in all respects a sincere upright man in Christ; so the word here used may be understood, being the reverse of (adokimov) , reprobate, rejected, spurious, adulterate and disapproved: in a word, this character shows, that he was not only approved of God and Christ, but of all good men, and particularly the apostle; and that on account of his being in Christ, united to him, and closely attached to his service and interest, and was an honour to it:

salute them which are of Aristobulus's household.

This was also a Greek name, though in use among the Jews; there was one of this name master of Ptolomy, king of Egypt, who was of Jewish extract, and of the priests,

``In the hundred fourscore and eighth year, the people that were at Jerusalem and in Judea,

and the council, and Judas, sent greeting and health unto Aristobulus,

king Ptolemeus' master, who was of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the Jews that were in Egypt:" (2 Maccabees 1:10)

One of the sons of Hyrcanus, the high priest of the Jews, was called by this name; Herod had a son of this name, and it was a name much in use in his family, and among his descendants: who this man was is not known, nor is he himself saluted by the apostle; either because he was now dead, or was absent from Rome at this time; for some say he was sent into Britain, our isle, to preach the Gospel, of which he is said to be bishop, and one of the seventy disciples; (See Gill on 10:1); or perhaps he might not be a believer in Christ, only his household believers, and therefore they only are taken notice of.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Serranon. l. 1. Satyr. 5. prope finem.

Romans 16:11

Salute Herodion my kinsman

According to the flesh, being of the same nation, a Jew; or of the same tribe, the tribe of Benjamin; or of the same family, and nearly allied in blood to him: though the name is of Attic, or Parthic original, and seems to be a derivative of Herod; this man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Tarsus: (See Gill on Luke 10:1).

Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord;

some have thought, that this Narcissus is the same man that Suetonius F17 and other writers speak of F18, who was secretary to Claudius Caesar; a very great favourite of his, who amassed a great deal of wealth under him, and was raised to great honour and dignity by him: he himself is not saluted, either because he was not at home, which might be the case, if, as Ambrose, or rather Hilary the deacon on the text says, he was a presbyter and abroad, performing his office in foreign parts; or because he was dead, or rather not a believer: if he was the same with Claudius's favourite, he was dead before this time, being miserably put to death by Agrippina F19, the wife of Claudius; and seems to have died a wicked man, and justly punished for his being the cause of the destruction of others, through his calumnies: nor are all of his household saluted, not being all converted persons; it being frequently the

method of divine grace to take some of a family, and not all, and bring them to Zion; only those that were "in the Lord", on his heart, and in his hands, secretly represented by him, and united to him, and who were openly in him, being called by his grace, and brought to believe in him, and live upon him.

FOOTNOTES:

F17 In Vita Claud sect. 28.

F18 Tacitus, Dio

F19 Tacit. Hist. l. 13.

Romans 16:12

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord

These two were women, and are said to be noble women of Iconium, whom the apostle converted there, and afterwards went to Rome the names are Greek F20, though they might be Jewish women, since Tryphon is the name of a man among the Jews. Trypho, the famous Jew, with whom Justin Martyr had his dialogue, is well known, and perhaps is the same with R. Tarphon, or Tryphon, so often mentioned in the Misnic and Talmudic writings: however, as these were women, their labour cannot be understood of their labouring in the word of the Lord, or in the public ministry of it, since this was forbid by the apostle, and therefore would never commend them on account of it; but of their great usefulness and indefatigableness, in serving the interest of their dear Lord with their purses; in relieving the poor of the church, in entertaining and supplying the ministers of the Gospel, as well as by their private instructions, exhortations, and giving an account of their own experience, whereby they might greatly encourage, edify, and strengthen young converts, and other Christians, as Priscilla with her husband did; and were unwearied in doing everything that they were capable of, in promoting the Gospel and kingdom of Christ:

salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord;

who being a woman also, and perhaps of Persic original, and might have her name from her country; her labour must be understood of the same kind with the former, only with this addition, that she abounded and exceeded in it; she is said by the Syriac scholiast to be the wife of Rufus, mentioned in (Romans 16:13).

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Vid. Gutherleth. Animadv. Philolog. in Inscript. Smyrn. p. 115

Romans 16:13

Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord

This was a Roman name; frequent mention is made Jewish writings F21 of one Turnus Rufus, a Roman officer, that destroyed the temple, and ploughed up the city of Jerusalem; the name was in use among the Cyrenians, for one of the sons of Simon of Cyrene, whom the Jews compelled to carry the cross of Christ, was so called, (Mark 15:21) ; and some have thought that the same person is here meant, nor is it unlikely; he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and to be bishop of Thebes; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). The apostle knew him, and that as one "chosen in the Lord"; meaning either that he was a choice believer in Christ, an excellent Christian, one of the highest form; for though all true believers have like precious faith, yet some are strong, and others weak, in the exercise of it; this man was eminent for his faith in Christ: or he might be one that was chosen to some office in the church, as to that of a deacon, or pastor; though had this been the case, it is much the particular office was not mentioned: rather therefore this is to be understood of his being chosen in Christ to grace and glory and that from all eternity; for the phrase is only used in one place more, (Ephesians 1:4) ; and there most manifestly designs the election of persons in Christ, before the foundation of the world; which election is made not "for" Christ, or the sake of his merits, his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, which have no causal influence on this act, and which purely arises from the love and grace of God; nor merely "by" him as God equal with the Father, though this is true; but "in" him, as the head and representative of the chosen ones: this instance, as others, shows that election is not of nations, nor churches, but of particular persons; and so expresses the distinguishing, free, and sovereign grace of God in it, that one and not another should be chosen; though these are on an equal foot, and so not owing to foreseen faith, holiness, and good works. The apostle knew this man to be a chosen vessel, not by immediate revelation, or divine inspiration, but by his faith in Christ, and love to him, and by the power of the Gospel on him; and so may anyone know himself, or another man hereby to be chosen, and ought in a judgment of charity so to think of him, as long as his life is agreeably to his profession; see (1 Thessalonians 1:4

1 Thessalonians 1:5) . The apostle not only salutes this man, but his mother also, who doubtless was a believer in Christ, and highly respected by him:

and his mother and mine;

the mother of Rufus in nature, and his mother in affection; and who very probably had endeared herself to the apostle by some kind offices, which she, as a Christian, had performed towards him; for the apostle cannot mean his own natural mother, besides Rufus's, whom he salutes, and whom Anselm on the place suggests might be at Rome; since it can hardly be thought he would have passed the mention of her in so transient a manner.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 2. T. Bab. Nedar. fol. 50. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 20. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Juchasin, fol. 36. 2.

Romans 16:14

Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes

The two first of these names are Greek, and the persons called by them, with Herodion before mentioned, are taken notice of in the Roman martyrology, as disciples of the apostle; Asyncritus is said to be bishop of Hyrcania, and Phlegon of Marathon, and both of the seventy disciples; (See Gill on Luke 10:1); Hermas is said to be bishop of Philippi, or Aquileia, and brother of Pope Pius the First, and to be the author of the book called Pastor, or the Shepherd, cited by many of the ancients; but all is doubtful and uncertain. Patrobas is a Roman name, Martial makes mention of it F23; it seems to be composed of the Greek word (pathr) , or the Latin "pater", and the Syriac (aba) , "Abba", and signifies the same as the other two. This man might be a Jew, whose name was Abba; we often read of R. Abba in the Jewish writings F24, and as the Jews were wont to have two names, the one Gentile, the other Jewish, Pater might be this man's Gentile name, and Abba his Jewish one, and both being put together, by contraction be called "Patrobas"; he is said to be of the seventy disciples, and to be bishop of Puteoli; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). The last of them, Hermes, is a Greek name, the same with Mercurius, which the Lystrians called Paul by, in (Acts 14:12) , who he was is not known; he is also mentioned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Dalmatia:

and the brethren which are with them;

these seem to have lived together, with others who were their brethren, not in a natural but spiritual relation, and whom the apostle owned and loved as such.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 Epigr. l. 2. ep. 27.

F24 Juchasin, fol. 70. 1

Romans 16:15**Salute Philologus, and Julia**

The first of these is a Greek name, and the name of a man, and signifies a lover of learning. This name Atteius assumed to himself, which Eratosthenes had done before him, because of his great learning F25; this man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Sinope: (See Gill on Luke 10:1). Julia is a woman's name, and Roman, probably the wife of the former; one of Stephens's copies read, "Junia":

Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them;

who all dwelt together also in one family; and were saints, by separation, imputation, and the effectual calling; were called to be saints, and lived as such, and had a place in the apostle's affections on that account: Nerio, or Neriene, according to Gellius {z}, was a name with the Sabines, signifying "strength", from whence came Nero; and Olympas is the same with Olympius, said to be of the seventy disciples, and a Roman martyr; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). It deserves some notice, that among all the persons here mentioned by name, known by the apostle to be at Rome, that he takes no notice of Peter; which surely he would have done, had he been, as the Papists say, bishop of Rome, and resided there.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Suetonius de illustr. Gram. c. 10.

F26 Noct. Attic, l. 13. c. 22.

Romans 16:16**Salute one another with an holy kiss**

Christian salutation is a wishing all temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness, to one another; and which, as it should be mutual, should be also hearty and sincere, and this is meant by the "holy kiss"; the allusion is to a common custom in most nations, used by friends at meeting or parting, to kiss each other, in token of their

heartly love, and sincere affection and friendship for each other; and is called "holy", to distinguish it from an unchaste and lascivious one; and from an hypocritical and deceitful one, such an one as Joab gave to Amasa, when, inquiring of his health, he took him by the beard to kiss him, and stabbed him under the fifth rib, (2 Samuel 20:9 2 Samuel 20:10); and as Judas, who cried, hail master, to Christ, and kissed him, and betrayed him into the hands of his enemies, (Matthew 26:49). I say, it is an allusion to this custom, for it is only an allusion; the apostle did not mean that any outward action should be made use of, only that their Christian salutations should not be mere complaisance, or expressed by bare words, and outward gestures and actions, either of the hand or mouth; but that they should spring from real love and true friendship, and be without dissimulation, hearty and sincere:

the churches of Christ salute you.

The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "all the churches"; that is, in Greece, or in the neighbourhood where the apostle was, and who might know of his writing to this church, and thereby send their Christian salutations to it; or if they did not know of his writing, yet as he knew their sincere affections, and hearty good will to this church, and the members of it, he in their names sent greetings to them: this shows the communion of churches, and how they ought to wish and sincerely desire each other's welfare.

Romans 16:17**Now I beseech you, brethren**

The apostle being about to finish his epistle, and recollecting that he had not given this church any instructions about the false teachers, who had been the cause of all their differences and uneasiness, inserts them here; or he purposely put them in this place, amidst his salutations, that they might be taken the more notice of; and very pertinently, since nothing could more express his great affection and tender concern for them; and these instructions he delivers to them, not in an authoritative way, as he might, and sometimes did, but by way of entreaty, beseeching them, and with the kind and loving appellation of brethren, the more to engage them to attend to what he was about to say to them:

mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.

The men he would have taken notice of were

such who divided them in their religious sentiments, introducing heterodox notions, contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, and which they had learned from them; such as justification by the works of the law, the observance of Jewish days, and abstinence from meats, enjoined by the ceremonial law, and that as necessary to salvation; to which some gave heed, and others not, and so were divided; whereas the doctrine of faith is but one, the Gospel is one uniform thing, all of a piece; and those that profess it ought to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment: hence their minds were alienated from each other, and they began to despise and judge one another, yea, to go into factions and parties, being unwilling to receive and admit each other to communion; and thus by these men they were divided in sentiments, affection, and worship; and which must needs cause offence to the church and the godly members of it, as well as cause many so to be offended, as to stumble and fall from the doctrine of faith, and profession of it, and greatly stagger and distress weak believers, and bring a scandal on religion, and the name and ways of Christ among the world, as nothing does more so than the jars and discords among Christians: wherefore the apostle advises to "mark" such persons, look out for, narrowly watch, strictly observe, and diligently examine them: the metaphor is taken from watchmen, who look out from their watch tower, and observe who are coming, or pass by, and take up suspicious persons, and carefully inquire who they are, and what they are about, and whether friends or foes. So both ministers of the Gospel, and members of churches, should not be asleep, which is the opportunity false teachers take to sow the seeds of false doctrine, discord, and contention, but should watch, and be upon their guard, and look diligently, that none among them fail of, or fall from, the doctrine of grace, or any root of bitterness, error, or heresy as well as immorality, spring up, which may be troublesome, and defile others; they should observe, and take notice of such who are busy to spread false doctrine, should watch their motions, follow them closely, take them to an account, examine their principles according to the word of God; and if found to be contrary thereunto, note them as false teachers:

and avoid them;

shun their ministry, drop attendance on it, depart far from them, have no private conversation with them, receive them not into their houses, nor bid them God

speed; with such do not eat, have no communion with them at the Lord's table, withdraw from them as disorderly persons, who act contrary to the doctrine and order of the Gospel, and after proper admonition reject them from all fellowship with you.

Romans 16:18**For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,**

&c.] They do not preach him, but themselves; they do not seek the things of Christ, his honour and glory, the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; they seek their own things, worldly honour and applause, riches, wealth, and grandeur; they seek to please men, and so are not the servants of Christ: they introduced the observance of meats and drinks in to the kingdom of Christ, which it do not consist of, and neglected the doctrines of righteousness and peace, from whence springs joy in the Holy Ghost, and so in these spiritual things did not serve Christ; and therefore, as they were not acceptable to God, were not to be approved of by Christian men, but to be marked and avoided:

but their own belly;

which they made a god of, and devoted themselves to the service of all their views were to gratify and indulge their sensual appetite. The false teachers among the Jews were particularly addicted to this vice: hence the apostle sometimes calls them dogs, (Philippians 3:2), on account of their voraciousness, and who, in Isaiah's time, were greedy ones that could never have enough, (Isaiah 56:11); and in our Lord's time devoured widows' houses, under a pretence of long prayers for them, (Matthew 23:14) (Mark 12:40) (Luke 20:47); and were like the Cretians, evil beasts, and slow bellies, (Titus 1:12), unwilling to labour, and lived upon the spoil of others:

and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple:

they were deceivers; they lay in wait to deceive, made use of the hidden things of dishonesty, walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully; and therefore to be marked and avoided: they deceived "the simple", harmless, and innocent, that think no evil, nor are aware of any; who have little understanding of things; persons of weak minds, easy to be imposed upon; very credulous, ready to believe every word,

so the simple man does, as Solomon says, (Proverbs 14:15); and such false teachers choose to tamper with, and make their attacks upon, being able to gain upon them the most easily, as their father the devil, the old serpent, did, when he first assailed human nature: the “hearts” of these they deceive; they work upon their affections, blind their understandings, impose on their judgments, and corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ: and this they do “by good words and fair speeches”; either by making use of the words of Scripture, and a show of arguments taken from thence; so Satan cited Scripture in his dispute with our Lord; and so heretics, in all ages, have pretended toil in favour of their principles, by which means they have gained on many to follow their pernicious ways; or by using words and phrases that faithful ministers of Christ use, such as the grace of God, the righteousness of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, but in a different sense; as some among us now frequently make mention of them, when they mean no more by them than the light of nature within them, and the dictates of a natural conscience; or by an elegant style, a set of fine words, a flow of rhetorical expressions, great swelling words of vanity, which such men generally affect, and so work themselves into the admiration of the common people; or by doctrines suited to the carnal minds and reasonings of men, which tickle human nature, and swell it with pride and vanity; as by preaching up the purity and power of it, asserting man’s free will, and the strength of it to that which is good; the capacity of man to keep the law, and perform good works; justification by them before God, and acceptance with him, on account of them; atonement for sins committed, by repentance and reformation; that God does not regard trifling things, some sins are venial, and easily passed over; that concupiscence is no sin; God does not rigorously exact duty, he takes the will for the deed, and is merciful unto all, and if but sincere, there is no doubt of heaven; and such men, generally speaking, instead of correcting vice, and reproving men for their sins, connive at them, indulge them in them, soothe and flatter, commend and defend them, whereby they attach them to their persons and interest.

Romans 16:19

For your obedience is come abroad unto all men

That is, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, “the fame” and report of their obedience to the faith, to the doctrine of the Gospel, and the ministers of it, was

spread everywhere, was well known to everyone, and spoken of with commendeth among all the churches in all nations: and this the apostle mentions as another reason why they should beware of false teachers, since it would be greatly to their reproach, should they, after all this, drop that form of doctrine which they had obeyed, desert the faithful ministers of the word, and follow these false teachers; should this be the case, they would be as notorious for their disobedience, as now for their obedience: and moreover, the apostle might hereby suggest, that whereas it was everywhere known how readily and at once they embraced the Gospel of Christ; this credulity and readiness to believe, which was their commendation, might have invited false teachers among them, who might hope and take encouragement from hence the more easily to gain upon them; and therefore they ought to be upon their watch and guard, and beware of them, and not believe every spirit:

I am glad therefore on your behalf;

that they had so cheerfully and readily embraced the Gospel, and from the heart obeyed that form of doctrine delivered to them; and that their praise for this was in all the churches of Christ, and had everywhere a good report on this account:

but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil;

which is just the reverse of natural and unregenerate men, who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge; some reference seems to be had to the words of Christ in (Matthew 10:16); the apostle’s meaning is, that though he rejoiced at the heartiness and simplicity of their obedience, and the credit they obtained abroad on account of it, yet was he not without his fears and jealousies concerning them; and could not but greatly wish them more wisdom to understand the doctrines of the Gospel, to discern things that differ, and approve that which is the most excellent, and hold fast that which is good; and with all their harmlessness, innocence, and simplicity, prudently guard against all evil doctrines and principles, such as might unawares lead them into bad practices, dishonourable to religion, and uncomfortable to themselves.

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace (See Gill on Romans 15:33);

shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

Some read this by way of wish or prayer, “may the God of peace bruise”; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and the Alexandrian copy; but others as ours, as a promise, or as expressive of the apostle’s faith and hope in this matter; and which he mentions to encourage the members of this church to be upon their guard, and make head against these false teachers; since in a little time they might be assured of victory over Satan and these his emissaries: as it is before suggested, that the methods these men used to beguile weak minds were much like those that Satan used when he attacked our first parents, so here is a manifest allusion to what was said by way of threatening to him, “it”, the woman’s seed, “shall bruise thy head”, (Genesis 3:15); and which has had its accomplishment in Christ, who has not only destroyed the works of the devil, but him himself, and spoiled his principalities and powers, and bruised him and them under his feet, when he led captivity captive; and though, for the trial of the graces of his people, Satan is permitted to attack them in various shapes, yet in a short time he will be bruised under their feet, as he is already under their Lord and master’s. The apostle refers not so much to his coming among them in a short time, when he might hope and believe that he should be an instrument of crushing these men Satan made use of, of quelling the contentions they raised, and putting a stop to the divisions they made, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the God of peace, restore them to their former peace and tranquillity, though it is a sense not to be despised; much less does he refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be in a very short time, when the crucifiers of Christ and the persecutors of the saints would have the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost, since these Romans had no great and immediate concern with them; nor does he regard the spread of the Gospel in the Gentile world, whereby Satan fell as lightning from heaven, and was cast out of the idol temples, for this was greatly fulfilled already: but rather he refers to the time of Constantine, when Satan’s seat at Rome was overturned, when he was cast down from his throne and trampled under feet, who had deceived the whole world, the whole Roman empire, when the Gospel triumphed over its secret and open enemies, profane persecutors, and perfidious teachers, over idolatry and superstition on the one hand, and error and heresy on the other, though this did not last long; wherefore some have thought the apostle refers to the latter day, when Satan shall be bound a thousand years, or to the last of all, when he shall be for ever under

the feet of the saints, and never be able to give them any more trouble; and this the apostle might say would be shortly, since the second coming of Christ was expected to be quickly: yea, this may be applied to the case of every believer now, and be for his encouragement to be vigilant and on his guard against Satan, to resist him, repel his temptations, and oppose his emissaries; since he may assure himself he shall be more than a conqueror over him through Christ, that has loved him, and that in a very little time, when death comes, and he shall enter into the joy of his Lord, where he will be out of the reach of Satan, and unmolested by him.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen:

to enable you to abide by the truth; to mark and avoid the authors of sects, and causes of divisions, and offences; to oppose error and defend truth; to keep from falling, to stand against every assault of Satan, and to bear up under every temptation of his; to get the victory over him, and to preserve them safe to the kingdom and glory of Christ.

Romans 16:21

Timotheus my work fellow

Now follow the salutations of the friends and companions of the apostle: we may imagine that when this epistle was just concluding, that these his friends being about him, one said, pray send my Christian salutation to our dear friends at Rome, so said a second, and likewise a third, and so on, and Timotheus he began. This is the same person with Timothy, a disciple the apostle met with at Derbe, whose father was a Greek, and his mother a Jewess, and a believer in Christ. This same man he circumcised because of the Jews, and took him along with him, and was his companion in his travels, and very assisting to him in the work of the ministry, in spreading the Gospel, and promoting the interest of Jesus Christ; and therefore he here calls him his “work fellow”; he wrote two epistles to him afterwards when at a distance front him, in which he often calls him his son, his dear and well beloved son, having a great affection for him, because as a son with a father he served with him in the Gospel of Christ:

and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen salute you.

This Lucius was either Lucius of Cyrene, who was one of the prophets in the church at Antioch, (Acts

13:1) , though indeed he is never said to travel with the apostle, or to be at Corinth, from whence this epistle was written; or rather, therefore, as others think, Luke the evangelist, who was a constant companion of the apostle, and was at Corinth with him at this time, as appears from (Acts 20:5) ; Jason no doubt is he of Thessalonica, that received Paul and Silas into his house, and when an uproar was made concerning them, was brought before the rulers of the city, and gave security for them, (Acts 17:5 Acts 17:6 Acts 17:9) . This is a Jewish name, and he himself was a Jew, as is clear from his being a kinsman of the apostle's; his name was (ewvy) , "Jeshua" or "Jesus"; so we read of one Jason, the brother of Onias the high priest of the Jews,

``But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest," (2 Maccabees 4:7)

and whose name, as Josephus F1 relates, was Jesus, but he chose to be called Jason, very likely because that was a name among the Greeks, whose fashions he was fond of. Sosipater was Sopater of Berea, who, with others, accompanied the apostle into Asia, (Acts 20:4) ; he also was a Jew, and his Jewish name, as Grotius conjectures, might be Abisha, or rather Abishua, the name of the son of Phinehas the high priest, (1 Chronicles 6:4) . Mention is also made of one of this name, Sosipater, in

``12. Howbeit Dositheus and Sosipater, who were of Maccabeus' captains, went forth, and slew those that Timotheus had left in the fortress, above ten thousand men. 24. Moreover Timotheus himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater, whom he besought with much craft to let him go with his life, because he had many of the Jews' parents, and the brethren of some of them, who, if they put him to death, should not be regarded." (2 Maccabees 12:12,24)

These three last were Paul's kinsmen after the flesh, as well as in the spirit; being of the same nation, and perhaps of the same tribe, and it may be of the same family; they are all three mentioned among the severity disciples: Lucius is said to be bishop of Laodicea in Syria, Jason of Tarsus, and Sosipater of Iconium; (See Gill on Luke 10:1).

FOOTNOTES:

F1 Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 1.

Romans 16:22

I Tertius, who wrote this epistle

This name is a Latin one, and perhaps the person might be a Roman, for the names Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus were common with the Romans; unless it may be thought, as it is by some, that this man was the same with Silas, who was a constant companion of the apostle; and the Hebrew word (vly) is the same as Tertius; he also is numbered among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Iconium; (See Gill on Luke 10:1). Whosoever he was, it is certain he was an amanuensis of the apostle, who wrote this letter, either from the apostle's notes, or from his mouth.

Salute you in the Lord.

Some connect this phrase, "in the Lord", with the other, "wrote this epistle", and make the sense to be that he wrote this epistle for the Lord's sake, for his honour and glory; which he might do, though he wrote it not by inspiration, being only scribe to the apostle; but it is better connected with the word "salute", and the sense is, that his salutation was not a mere form, nor only concerned their temporal good, but their spiritual welfare; that he wished them well in the Lord, that they might have much communion with him, and larger measures of grace from him.

Romans 16:23

Gaius mine host

There was one Gaius a Macedonian, that was with the apostle at Ephesus, (Acts 19:29) ; and another Gaius of Derbe, that accompanied him into Asia, (Acts 20:4) ; whether either of these, as the latter seems more probable, was this person, is not certain. However, it seems very likely that it is the same Gaius the apostle baptized at Corinth, (1 Corinthians 1:14) ; and some have thought him to be the same that the Apostle John wrote his third epistle to, and indeed the characters of hospitality and generosity there given him well agree with this, who was not only the apostle's host that entertained him in a kind and liberal manner, but of all the saints:

and of the whole church, saluteth you;

that is, of the church at Corinth, to whom he was kind and hospitable, even to as many as stood in need of his assistance; or of the church of Christ in general, being beneficent and liberal to all Christian strangers

that came that way, lodged them at his house, and provided every thing proper and convenient for them. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that there was a public hospital or receptacle for strangers at Corinth, in imitation of the Jews, who had a place adjoining to their synagogues to entertain travellers in; and that Gaius was the chief officer and overseer of this house, who, discharging his trust well, is deservedly commended. That the Jews had places near their synagogues for such a purpose is, certain. It is said F2,

``why do they sanctify (or consecrate the day?) that travellers may do their duty, who eat, and drink, and sleep in the synagogue."

The gloss on it is,

``not the synagogue itself, but the chambers which were near the synagogue, are called the synagogue, and from thence they heard the consecration."

And elsewhere F3 it is said,

``in the synagogues they neither eat nor drink--but there is a place near the synagogue where travellers used to sleep and eat;"

and then follows what is said before. And Maimonides F4 observes,

``there is no sanctification (of the sabbath) but in the place where the meal is eaten; so a man may not sanctify in one house, and eat in another; but if he sanctifies in this, he must eat in this; but why do they sanctify in the synagogue? because of travellers who eat and drink there."

Upon which his commentator remarks F5, that

``they do not eat in the synagogue at all, but they eat, (בבית המנוח לבית הכנסה) , "in a house near the synagogue", where they sit at the time of hearing the sanctification."

But whether there was such an house at Corinth near the place of public worship, or any where else for this purpose, is not certain; and to make Gains only an overseer over such an house, though a faithful one, greatly sinks his character; since one would conclude from hence, that his entertainment of the apostle, and other saints, was at his own expense.

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you;

whom the apostle is said to leave at Corinth, (2 Timothy 4:20) , and at another time to send along with Timotheus into Macedonia, if the same person is intended; for these do not seem so well to accord with his being in such an office, which must require attendance, and would not admit of going from place to place with the apostle, or of being sent by him. The city, of which he was chamberlain, was the city of Corinth, where the apostle and this Erastus were, when this epistle was wrote. The word translated "chamberlain", is often used for a steward; and here it signifies such an officer as had the care of the city chest or coffer, and distributed the public money; and seems to answer to the "quaestor urbanus", or city treasurer, among the Romans, whose business it was to receive the city accounts, and disburse at all occasions of public expenses; so that this was a place of honour and trust; hence it appears, that though not many, yet some rich and honourable were called by grace, and embraced the Gospel. His name signifies beloved, and is the same with David in Hebrew. What nation he was of is not certain, whether a Roman, a Greek, or Jew; one of this name is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and it said to be bishop of Paneas, or of the Philippians; (See Gill on Luke 10:1).

Quartus a brother;

not of Tertius, nor of Erastus, nor of the apostle according to the flesh, as some have thought, but a brother in a spiritual relation. This man, as appears from his name, was a Roman; probably had before lived at Rome, and therefore sends his salutations to the Christians there: he is mentioned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Berytus; (See Gill on Luke 10:1).

FOOTNOTES:

F2 T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 101. 1.

F3 Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2.

F4 Hilchot Sabbat, c. 29. sect. 8.

F5 Maggid. Misnah in ib.

Romans 16:24

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

] This verse is placed by the Syriac at the end of the chapter, and is wanting in the Ethiopic version, and in one ancient copy, being, excepting the word all, the same as at the end of (Romans 16:20) ; but inasmuch as it is in all other copies, it ought to be repeated and stand here: the reason of the repetition may either be,

because the former might be written by his amanuensis, and this with his own hand, as was usual with him in all his epistles, by which they might be known to be his, (2 Thessalonians 3:17 2 Thessalonians 3:18) ; or the apostle having so great an affection for this church, knew not how to take his leave of them, but repeats his valediction again and again, as here, and in (Romans 16:20) (15:33) . (Romans 16:25-27) are placed in some copies, at the end of (Romans 16:14) , and omitted here, as they are by the Arabic version, which begins thus, “to the only most wise God, Jesus Christ”: and so considers the following doxology as be, longing to Christ, and to him as God, and as the only most wise God.

Romans 16:25

Now to him that is of power to stablish you God is here described by his power, and the particular instance of it is the establishing of his people; that is, in the Gospel, as the Syriac version reads the next clause, and in the profession of it, with grace in their hearts, and in the exercise of it, and more lively and cheerful discharge of duty; (See Gill on Romans 1:11);

according to my Gospel;

this is the means by which God usually establishes his people in faith and holiness; it is, indeed, an act of divine power, and which there is reason to hope and believe will be exerted; for words which express the power of God to do this, or the other thing, generally import willingness to do it, as the word does here; but then this is commonly done in the use of means: and that is the Gospel, than which nothing has a greater tendency to, and is better calculated for, and with a divine blessing always issues in the establishment of the saints. The apostle calls the Gospel his, not because he was the author of it, or the subject of it; but because he was the minister of it; it was that Gospel which he was sent and qualified to preach, and did preach fully and faithfully, and which he explains by the following clauses:

and the preaching of Jesus Christ:

being that Gospel which Jesus Christ himself preached, for which he was anointed and sent, and which first began to be spoken by him in its power and purity, and in such a manner as it never was before or since: and of which he also is the subject; it treats of his person, offices, righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and salvation; and which when preached aright is done in his name, by his authority, through gifts, grace, and

strength received from him, and with a view to his glory: it follows as a further explanation of it,

according to the revelation of the mystery;

by which is meant, not, as some think, only the calling and conversion of the Gentiles through the preaching of the Gospel, though what is said of it well agrees with it; see (Ephesians 3:3-5) ; nor merely the mystery of Christ’s incarnation and redemption by him; but the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it, which is often in Scripture called a “mystery”, because the reason of many of its important doctrines does not clearly appear to the carnal reason of men; and the “modus” of several of them will ever remain inexplicable by us, as the doctrine of the Trinity, the sonship of Christ, and his incarnation, the resurrection though the things themselves are most clearly revealed, as here “revelation” is ascribed unto them; by which is meant not that internal revelation of them, by the Spirit of God to the souls of men, though absolutely necessary to the understanding of them in a spiritual manner; nor the revelation of them to the apostles by Christ, by which, and not by men, they were taught and received; but that revelation which they have made of them in the external ministry of the word:

which was kept secret since the world began,

or “from eternal times”: from all the ages of the former dispensation, or that have run out from the beginning of the world; not that this mystery of the Gospel was entirely unknown, nor any hints given of it in those ages; for there certainly were, as to our first parents after the fall, to Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and others; but it was but obscurely revealed, only some dark intimations were given of it; it was exhibited in types, shadows, and sacrifices; and, in a comparative sense, was wrapped up in darkness and silence, in reference to the more clear discovery and open exhibition of it under the Gospel dispensation.

Romans 16:26

But now is made manifest

In these last days, in which God has spoken by his Son, by whom the doctrines of grace are most clearly revealed, and fully dispensed; and by his apostles, who were blessed with a clear insight into them, and with extraordinary gifts to minister them;

and by the Scriptures of the prophets;

or prophetic writings, in which these truths are

hinted, and by which, being made manifest by Christ and his apostles, they are attested and confirmed;

according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;

that is, it is by the express order and command of that God who is from everlasting to everlasting, that the mystery of the Gospel is made manifest by the preaching of the apostles being witnessed to by the law and prophets in all its doctrines; particularly justification by Christ’s righteousness, remission of sins through his blood, and salvation by his sufferings and death; that this should be made known not only in the land of Judea, but to all the nations of the world; for this end, that many souls may be brought to submit to the righteousness of faith, to embrace the doctrine of faith, make a profession of it, be subject to the ordinances of it, live by faith on Christ, and also soberly, righteously and godly in this world: if this commandment refers, as it seems to do, to the order of Christ to his apostles, to preach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles, to the Jews first, and upon their rejection of it, to turn to the Gentiles; for so, says the apostle, has the Lord commanded us, (Acts 13:46 Acts 13:47) ; here is a clear proof that Christ is God, and that he is the everlasting God.

Romans 16:27

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ

This may be understood of God the Father, who is the only wise God, originally, essentially, and infinitely; though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and whose infinite wisdom appears in the works of creation and providence, in redemption and salvation by Christ, and in the whole scheme of the Gospel so largely commended in the foregoing verses: and the glory of all is displayed in, and to be given to him through Christ as Mediator; as the glory of his power and wisdom, particularly mentioned, who is the wisdom of God and the power of God; and the glory of the Gospel, of which Christ is the sum and substance; and the glory of salvation by him, and indeed of all his perfections; which is most illustriously manifested in it, in the contrivance, impetration, and application of it; and this glory is to be ascribed to him

for ever,

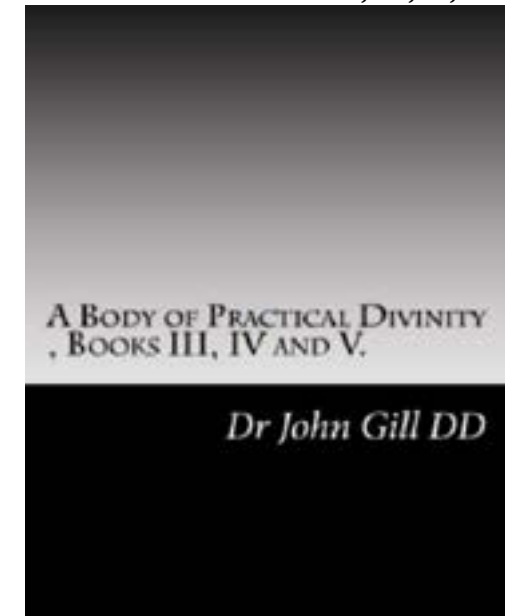
throughout the endless ages of eternity, as it will be by angels and men; to which the apostle sets his

Amen,

as wishing that so it might be, and as firmly believing that so it will be: the subscription of the epistle runs thus, “written to the Romans from Corinthus”, and sent “by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea”: which though it is not in every copy, nor are the subscriptions at the end of the epistles always to be depended upon; yet this seems to be a right and true one, both with respect to the place from whence, and the person by whom it was sent, as well as with respect to the persons to whom it is inscribed, of which there is no doubt.

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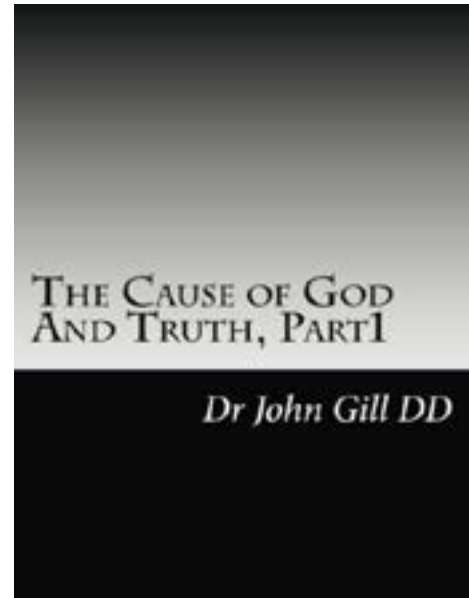
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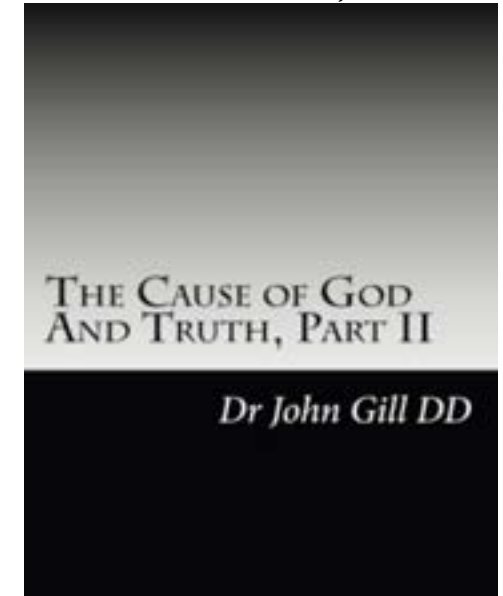
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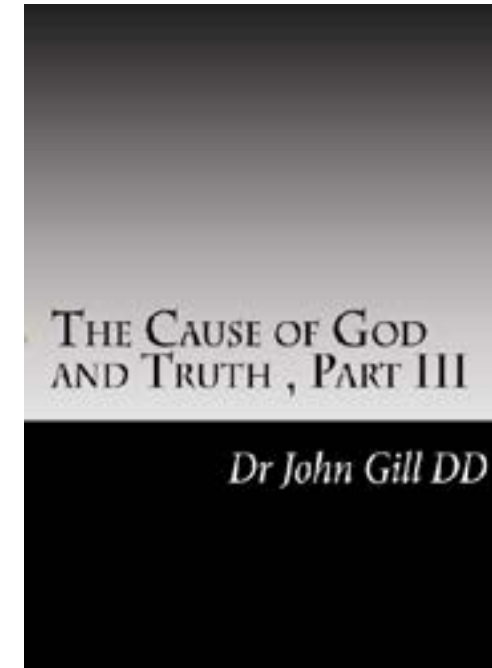
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John 3:5.
Ephesians 2:1.

1 Corinthians 2:14.
2 Corinthians 3:5.
John 15:5.
John 6:44.
Acts 11:18.
Acts 16:14.
Jeremiah 31:18.
Jeremiah 31:33.
Ezekiel 11:36:26.
Philippians 2:13.
1 Corinthians 4:7.
Ephesians 2:8, 9.
Chapter 5
OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE
John 14:4
Psalm 51:5.
Genesis 6:5.
John 3:6.
Romans 7:18, 19.
Romans 8:7, 8.
Chapter 6
OF PERSEVERANCE
John 13:1.
John 17:12.
Romans 11:29.
Matthew 24:24.
John 6:39, 40.
Romans 11:2.
Romans 8:38, 39.
Ephesians 1:13, 14.
1 Peter 1:5.
1 John 2:19.
1 John 3:9.
Isaiah 54:10.
Isaiah 59:21.
Hosea 2:19, 20.
Jeremiah 32:40.
John 14:16.
John 10:28.
1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III.



The Doctrines of Grace
Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Authored by David
Clarke CetEd
List Price: \$9.99
8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)
Black & White on White paper
108 pages
ISBN-13: 978-1544810591 (CreateSpace-Assigned)
ISBN-10: 1544810598
BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic
This book contains John Gill's answers to Dr
Whitby objections to The Doctrines of Grace under the
following heads.

Chapter 1
OF REPROBATION
Proverbs 16:4.
John 12:39, 40.
1 Peter 2:8. 10
Jude 1:4. 1
Revelation 13:8. 1
Chapter 2
OF ELECTION
1 Peter 2:9. 16
Romans 9:10-13.
Colossians 3:12.
Ephesians 1:4.
Romans 8:28, 29.
John 6:37.
Acts 8:48.
Romans 8:29, 30.

2 Timothy 2:19.
Romans 5:19.
Chapter 3
OF REDEMPTION
Matthew 20:28.
John 10:15.
John 17:9.
Romans 8:34.
Romans 8:32.
Romans 5:10.
John 15:13.
Chapter 4
OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE
Ephesians 1:19, 20.
1 Corinthians 5:17.
John 3:5.
Ephesians 2:1.
1 Corinthians 2:14.
2 Corinthians 3:5.
John 15:5.
John 6:44.
Acts 11:18.
Acts 16:14.
Jeremiah 31:18.
Jeremiah 31:33.
Ezekiel 11:36:26.
Philippians 2:13.
1 Corinthians 4:7.
Ephesians 2:8, 9.
Chapter 5
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John 14:4
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Romans 8:7, 8.
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OF PERSEVERANCE
John 13:1.
John 17:12.
Romans 11:29.
Matthew 24:24.
John 6:39, 40.
Romans 11:2.
Romans 8:38, 39.
Ephesians 1:13, 14.
1 Peter 1:5.
1 John 2:19.

1 John 3:9. 87
 Isaiah 54:10.
 Isaiah 59:21.
 Hosea 2:19, 20.
 Jeremiah 32:40.
 John 14:16.
 John 10:28.
 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

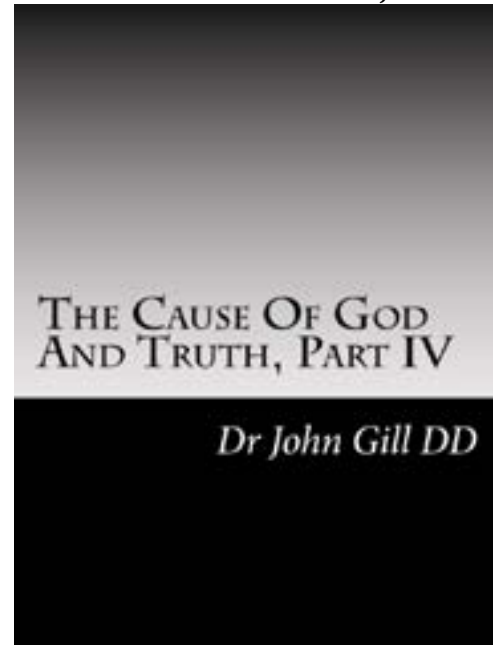
The following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminians, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737.

THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH, PART IV



Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$8.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

126 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544848709 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544848706

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736,

in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

This is Part 4 of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

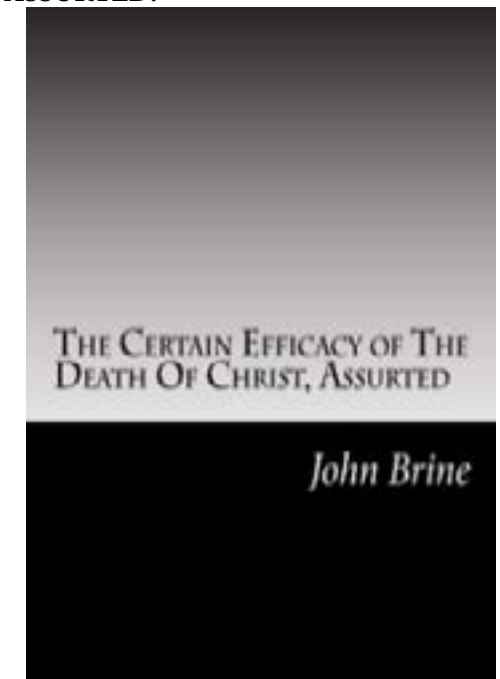
This work contains:

Chapter 1 Of Predestination

Chapter 2 Of Redemption

Chapter 3 Or Original Sin
 Chapter 4 Of Efficacious Grace
 Chapter 5 Of Perseverance
 Chapter 6 Of The Heathens
 A Vindication of The Cause of God and Truth
 This work contains:
 Chapter 1 Of Predestination
 Chapter 2 Of Redemption
 Chapter 3 Or Original Sin
 Chapter 4 Of Efficacious Grace
 Chapter 5 Of Perseverance
 Chapter 6 Of The Heathens

A Vindication of The Cause of God and Truth
THE CERTAIN EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, ASSURED.



Authored by John Brine

Created by David Clarke

List Price: \$7.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

114 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1973922254 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1973922258

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

This work declares the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, all of which are intimately concerned in them. This is treated in four parts: In the First John Brine endeavours to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died.

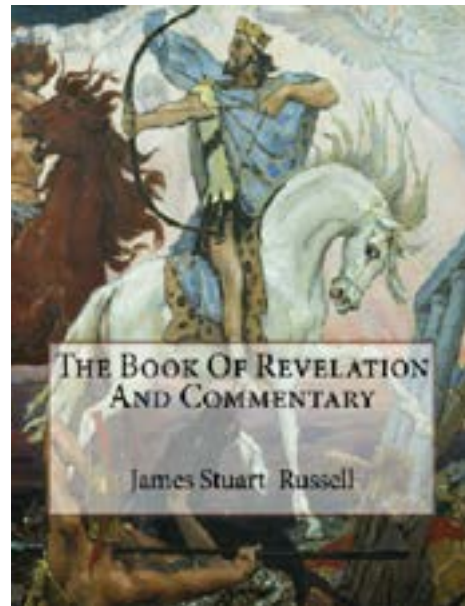
In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered.

In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them.

In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

This has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptists to further the cause of God and truth, it opposes Arminianism, Islam, and duty faith.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND COMMENTARY



Authored by James Stuart Russell, Created by David Clarke, Foreword by Don K. Preston

List Price: \$9.00

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

118 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1973780359 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1973780356

BISAC: Religion / Biblical Studies / New Testament

The book of Revelation has produced many ideas in the minds of men as to what the future holds for mankind and some believe Revelation predicts the end of the world. There are a range of views held by professing Christians about the meaning of the book and some believe much of what is spoken about in the book has yet to be fulfilled.

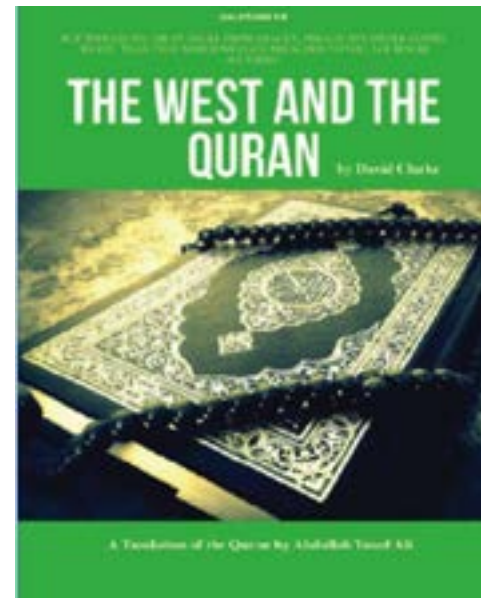
This book reproduces the The of Revelation written as published in the King James version of the bible and includes a commentary on Revelation, by James Stuart

Russell. Russell has already clearly demonstrated, in part 1 and part II of his book (The The Parousia), that book of Revelations is a prophecy about the end of the Jewish age and rule by Moses and that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the promise of his return, to his disciples, at his coming in vengeance at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

We included in this book James Stuart Russell's part III of the Parousia, which is a commentary on the book of Revelation (Apocalypse) in which it is taken as fact that the Lord Jesus came again in Judgement upon old covenant Israel, in 70 A.D. destroying Jerusalem and the Temple, bringing a fulfilling end to the rule of Law by Moses.

Both the Muslim and those Christians holding to a futurist view of the end times are invited to challenge their views.

THE WEST AND THE QURAN



Translation of The Quran

Authored by David Clarke, Authored with Abdullah Yusuf Ali

List Price: \$9.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

248 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1548914042 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1548914045

BISAC: Religion / Biblical Criticism & Interpretation / General

This Publication treats the subject of the Quran and the reason for presenting this is due to a rise in Islamic terrorism which has caused great concern to many in the West. So with the current massive influx

of Muslim's migrating from the various parts of the world into Europe, Great Britain and the USA, it seems reasonable to discover the roots of Islam in order to deal with the problems that have occurred. Our Politicians seem clueless on how to deal with this enemy and when they are questioned they appear to know relatively little about Muhammad and his teaching. One of our greatest Prime-ministers in Britain William Gladstone declared the Quran an "Accursed book" and once held a copy of Muhammad's Quran up in Parliament, declaring: "So long as there is this book there will be no peace in the world".

Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th Century, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II and again from 1951 to 1955.

As an officer of the British Army in 1897 and 1898, he fought against a Pashtun tribe in the north west frontier of British India and also at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. In both of those conflicts, he had eye-opening encounters with Muslims. These incidents allowed his keen powers of observation and always-fluid pen to weigh in on the subject of Islamic society.

While these words were written when he was only 25-years-old (in 1899), they serve as a prophetic warning to Western civilisation today.

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy."

Churchill apparently witnessed the same phenomenon in several places he visited. "The effects are apparent in many countries: improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live."

He saw the temporal and the eternal tainted by their belief system. "A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity," he wrote.

The second-class status of women also grated at the young officer. "The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men," he noted.

"Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities,

but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world."

Well before the birth of modern Israel, its terror tactics and drive for world domination were felt. "Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it (Islam) has vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome."

With the influx of Muslim people from the various parts of the continent along with their culture all of which is shaped by the teachings of Muhammad in the Quran.

Some objections and Observations are as follows:

Islam means submission

Islam does not mean peace

Multiculturalism is a failure.

Islam denies the natural rights of women

An Objection Halal Meat

An Objection To Shari-ah Law

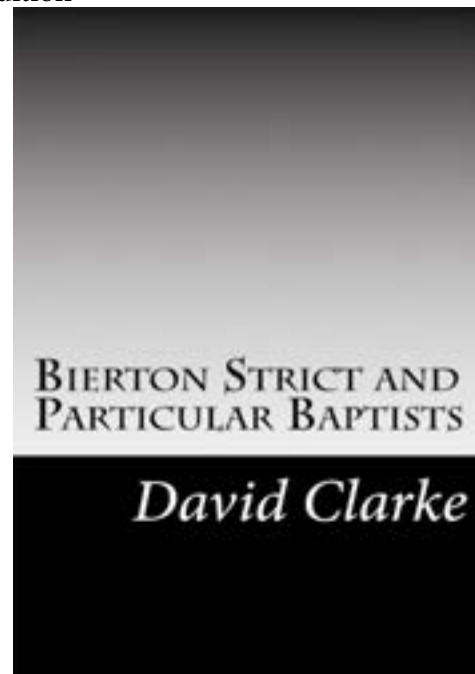
Objects to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

An objection to Jihad which seeks over throw Western culture through education, Social activity, political activation and Law.

For this reason, this publication is made available for education purposes. With this prayer that God may grant us all wisdom as to how we may respond to the rise and threat of Islam.

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

2nd Edition



Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert.

List Price: \$13.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

356 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519553287 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1519553285

BISAC: Biography & Autobiography / Religious

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license. They were however both converted from crime to Christ and turned their lives around.

This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 years later.

It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970.

It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of

the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others.

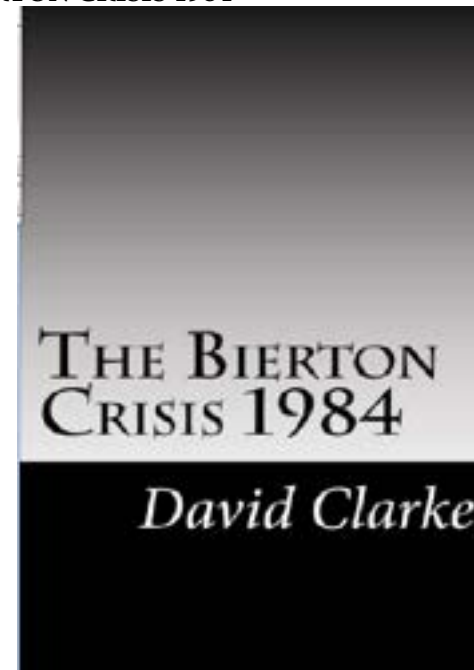
David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996.

David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines.

David tells how he felt compelled to write this story in his book, "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence.

This story is told in their joint book, "Trojan Warriors", that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row.

David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

THE BIERTON CRISIS 1984

2nd Edition: A Testimony of David Clarke

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert.E

List Price: \$10.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

244 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1534701717 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1534701710

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1831 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel

when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY

Second Edition: Does The Lord Jesus Want Women

To Rule As Elders In His Church ??

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

List Price: \$8.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

154 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

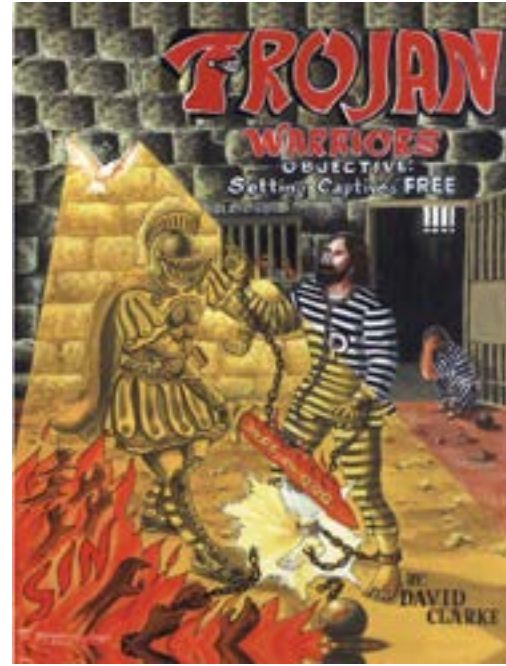
The Suffragettes

Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free

Authored by Mr David Clarke CertEd, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke

List Price: \$15.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

446 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1508574989 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1508574987

BISAC: Religion / Christian Life / General

Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967.

They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation.

David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005.

When David heard the news of his brothers arrest

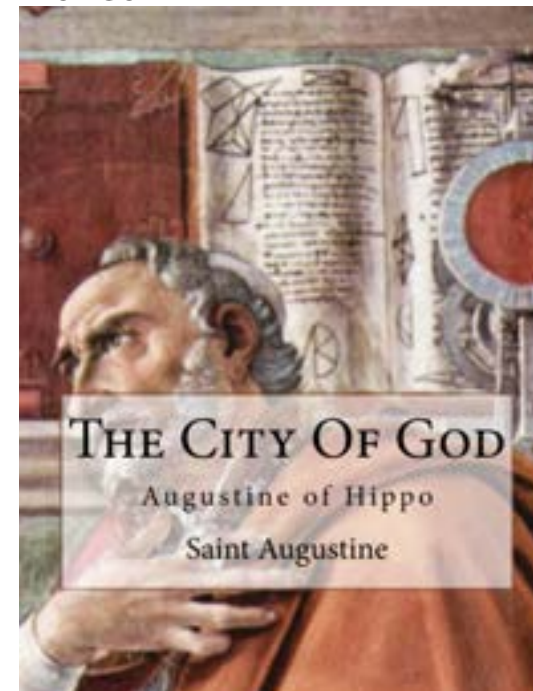
on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission.

They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ .

This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection.

Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

THE CITY OF GOD



Augustine of Hippo

Authored by Saint Augustine, Authored by David Clarke

List Price: \$10.28

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

272 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1547278985 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1547278986

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

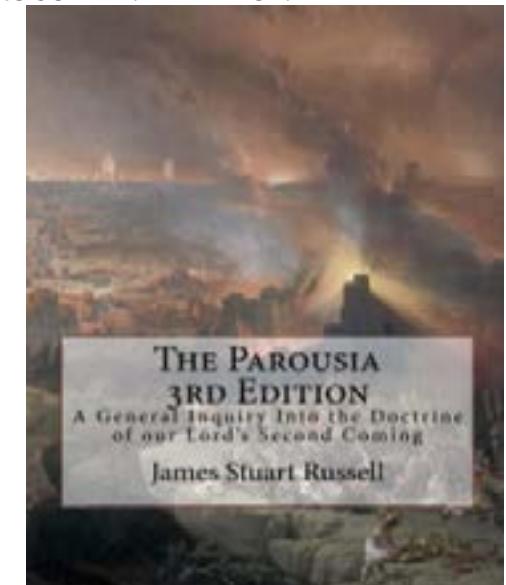
The City of God, is a book of Christian philosophy written in Latin by Augustine of Hippo in the early 5th century AD. The book was in response to allegations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome and is considered one of Augustine's most important works.

The City of God is a cornerstone of Western thought, expounding on many profound questions of theology, such as the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, the conflict between free will and divine omniscience, and the doctrine of original sin.

Augustine is recognized as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Eastern Christian Church, and the Anglican Communion and as a preminent Doctor of the Church.

Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace. Lutherans, and Martin Luther in particular, have held Augustine in preeminence (after the Bible and St. Paul). Luther himself was a member of the Order of the Augustinian Eremites (1505–1521).

THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION



The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

List Price: \$17.85

7" x 10" (17.78 x 25.4 cm)

Black & White on White paper

404 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519610942 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1519610947

BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the

modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

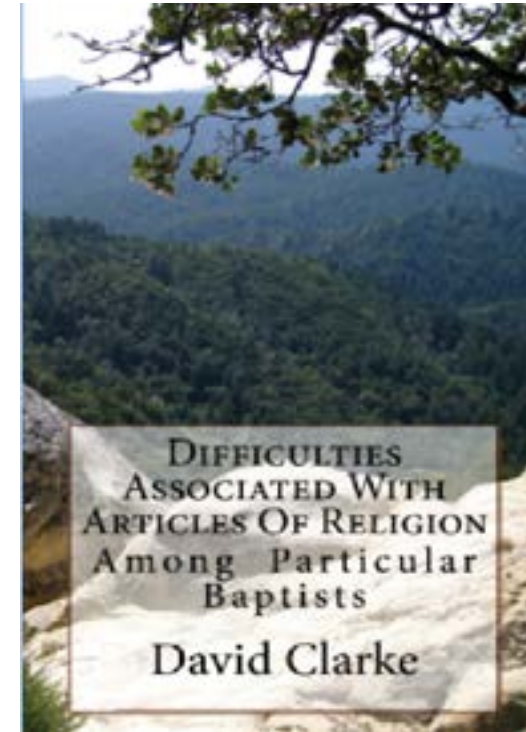
Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell’s work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

AMONG PARTICULAR BAPTISTS



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Berton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

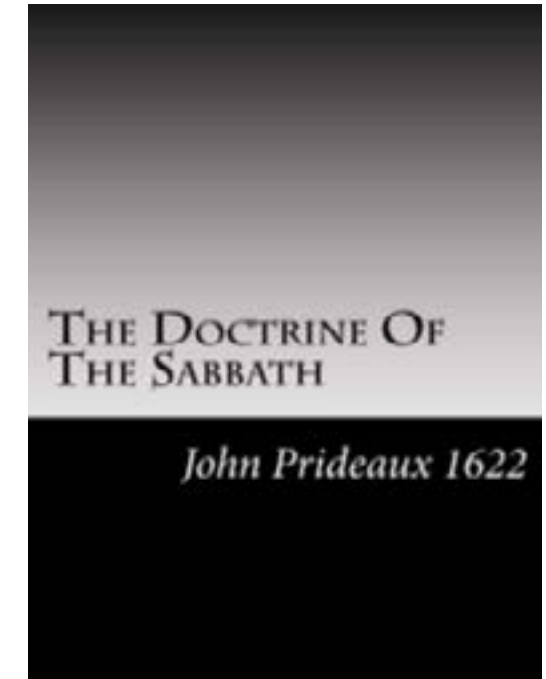
Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

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BISAC: Religion / Christianity / Baptist

THE DOCTRIN OF THE SABBATH 2nd Edition 1662



Authored by Dr John Prideaux, Created by David Clarke

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BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

Of all the controverts which have exercised the Church of Christ, there is none more ancient than that of the Sabbath: So ancient that it took beginning even in the infancy of the Church, and grew up with it. For as we read in the Acts There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the people, and to command them to keep the law of Moses; whereof the Sabbath was apart: Which in the general, as the apostles labours to suppress in their first General Council, held in Jerusalem: So did S. Paul, upon occasion of whose ministry this controversy first began, endeavor what he could against the particular, shapely reproving those which hallowed yet the Jewish Sabbath and observed days, and months, and times, as if he had bestowed his labor in vain upon them. But more particularly in his epistle to the Colossians, Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which were a shadow of things to

come but the body is of Christ. Both which expressions of Paul are in this following discourse produced to this very purpose. Yet notwithstanding all this care both generally of the Apostles and more especially of Paul to suppress this error; it grew up still and had its patrons and abettors.

This reproduction of, 'The doctrine of the Sabbath,' by Dr. John Prideaux has been presented for those who have been troubled by the insistence of those religious people who insist that the first day of the week is the Sabbath day and to be kept holy, as dictated by the law of Moses. It is not. We include also Dr. John Gill on the subject of the circumstances of public worship as to place and time. It is the view of this publisher that the time and place of Christian worship it