

CLASS NOTES ON ROMANS

These are Professor Zane Hodges' class notes on the Epistle to the Romans from the time period of 1971-1975, when he was Professor New Testament Greek. The views expressed in these Class Notes may differ from his later Romans Commentary work of 2008.

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CHAPTER 1

1:1. The salutation reveals Paul's sense both of his position and of his purpose before God. Two phrases denote his position, δούλος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and κλητὸς ἀπόστολος. The first stresses subjection, the second privilege. Κλητὸς in particular highlights this. Paul's apostolic prerogatives were always exercised in the spirit of bondservice to Jesus Christ. Indeed, all authority and privilege in the church operate only within the sphere of subjection to Christ. When carried beyond this sphere, they are mere expressions of the flesh.

A sense of position leads naturally to a sense of purpose. The verb ἀφωρισμένος with its connotation of separation focuses upon the special orientation of Paul's bondservice and apostleship. From competing objectives and pursuits, the apostle had been set apart so that he might concentrate on the furtherance of the gospel of God. The verb ἀφωρίζω is, in fact, the one used by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2) to call Barnabas and Saul to a new work in the furtherance of the gospel. To this end, they were on that occasion severed from the rest of the company (Acts 13:1-2), among whom they had been laboring to a special task which now called for their full energy. When, therefore, he writes to the Gentiles, this is a natural word for Paul to use; for among the nations, the furtherance of the gospel was Paul's reason for being. No epistle reveals this more clearly than Romans.

1:2. The Gospel to which Paul had been severed was not his own invention, nor was it even a revelation made especially to him. It was promised beforehand through prophets of old in the holy Scriptures as Acts reveals throughout—for example, Ac. 17:2; 24:14-15; 26:22-23; 28:23. Paul persistently appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures as giving authority to his gospel. Its validity could be ascertained from them.

1:3-4. The content of the gospel was God's Son. Paul preached not himself but Jesus Christ the Lord. He neither originated the gospel (1:2), nor was he its subject (1:3). He was but the slave of the One whom he preached (1:1). The essence of the gospel of God's Son is now presented. It involves both the Son's true humanity (τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ) and His true deity (τοῦ ὀρισθέντος Υἱοῦ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν δυνάμει). The incarnation is, therefore, basic to Paul's message (cp. 1 John 4:1-6). Of course, the deity of Christ is attested by many facts related to His earthly career, but Paul is pre-eminently the apostle of the resurrected Christ. Thus, he focuses here on the two *termini* of our Lord's experience on earth; that is, His birth, τοῦ γενομένου (notice the aorist), and His resurrection, ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν. The former establishes His humanity; the latter establishes His deity. The verb ὀρίζω seems to carry with it a note of divine ordination or decree. The English word *designate* comes as close as any to catching its various nuances. The resurrection of Christ constituted an official designation of Christ as God's Son (cp. Acts 13:33 and the notes on that passage). It was the day of Psalm 2:7 when God said to Him, "I have begotten You today." Here the stress falls also upon the power (ἐν δυνάμει) of that Sonship. The temporary weakness associated with His earthly life is terminated by the resurrection, and He now exercises all the power and prerogatives of divine Sonship. Cp. Acts 17:31 where God will judge ἐν ἀνδρὶ ὥρισεν. Then notice also in that context ἀναστῆσαι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. The resurrection then is the finger of God pointed to Jesus Christ as His powerful Son, through whom the mighty functions of God Himself—for example, judgment—are exercised. This truth will be important later in Romans where the power of the risen Christ is the key to victorious Christian living (for example, Rm. 5:10; cp. Rm. 1:16, also).

Note that the resurrection of Christ corresponds to (κατὰ) a spirit of holiness. This is also relevant to Christian living since the newness of life in which we walk by our co-resurrection with Him is according to the Spirit of holiness. As a designation of Christ as God's powerful Son, the resurrection also points clearly to the divine approval which rested on His life. Cp. Acts 17:31 where God will judge the world ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ by Christ, proof of which lies in the resurrection. In the resurrection God cancels man's judgment about His Son and passes His own verdict. The uniqueness of the resurrection stresses this. A man thus raised by God must be truly a holy man, a man deemed righteous in God's sight. Thus the divine declaration of His Sonship is one which accords with the spirit of holiness—ultimately, of course, the *Spirit* of holiness. Christ is thus marked off not only as powerful, but as the superlative expression of the Holy Spirit. In resurrection, for example, He baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

The phrase ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ought not to be read as a reference to Christ raising dead people. The whole tenor of Pauline thought everywhere argues conclusively for a reference here to the surpassing event of the resurrection of Christ Himself. The anarthrous phrase is in accord with all the anarthrous phrases in the vicinity—for example, εὐαγγέλιον Θεοῦ, Γραφαῖς ἀγίας, σπέρματος Δαυίδ, Ἰησοῦ, πνεῦμα γιωσύνης. The phrase means by the resurrection of the dead generically conceived. The raising of Christ is the superlative exemplification of the principle of resurrection (cp. 1 Cor. 15). His raising is in all its essential elements the resurrection of the dead. The use of this precise phrase, rather than, for example, resurrection *from* the dead, is doubtless due to the use Paul wishes to make in Romans of the resurrection life principle.

In fact, the special phrases of Rm. 1:3-4 anticipate basic themes of the epistle. For example, σπέρματος Δαυίδ suggests Israel's relation to the gospel (cp., especially, 15:8). Ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ Πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν suggests the power of the gospel, Rm. 1:4, by means of the Holy Spirit—chapter 8—to affect a resurrection life in the believer (8:11, etc.). (For the combination Davidic origin plus resurrection as an essential statement of Paul's gospel, cp. also 2 Tim. 2:8.) The phrase ἐν δυνάμει is here taken more with Ἰησοῦ Θεοῦ by me with τοῦ ὀρισθέντος, in which case, instead of describing the manner of the designation, describes the sphere in which the Son functions. The rhythm of the sentence seems to point to this since it is natural to connect the phrase and thought with what immediately precedes.

1:4b. Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν is grammatically appositional, but seems to mark a new turn in Paul's thought. I am talking about Jesus Christ our Lord through whom, etc. In vv 2-4a Paul has spoken about the basic content of the gospel—notice the preposition περὶ—authenticated as it was by the Old Testament Scriptures. In vv 4b-6 Paul speaks of the grace which the gospel has released, both to him and to his readers.

1:5. Paul marks himself off as the recipient both of χάριν and ἀποστολήν. The phrase could be construed as a hendiadys, the grace of apostleship, but probably is not. Rather, grace is the broad principle of which apostleship is a particular and preeminently significant expression. No doubt, Paul thinks of grace as involving the whole scope of his conversion, but apostleship was that conversion's chief earthly goal and a supreme grace. But, as always, the recipient of God's grace is intended to be a meeting for that grace. The apostleship which grace bestowed had as its goal the conversion of others—εἰς πακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. The noun πίστεως seems almost to be appositional—the obedience which is faith. God's desire is that such obedience might

find representative expression among all Gentile people. It is not universal salvation for all but a universal manifestation of salvation among all (cp. the notes on 1:13-15). The chief purpose of a representative realization of the obedience of faith is to the glory of God's Son upon whom the gospel centers, according to vv 2-4a. It is ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόματος αὐτοῦ that this obedience is to be achieved through Paul's apostleship. The ὑπὲρ phrase is to be construed more closely with εἰς ὑπακοήν than with ἀποστολήν since the length of the former construction tends to throw its idea into prominence and thus capture the ὑπὲρ construction. Thus, the apostleship of Paul is aimed at an obedience of faith among the Gentiles which is in the interest of the name of the Lord Jesus. It follows from this, of course, that the apostleship itself may be regarded as ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ despite that phrase's more immediate connection with obedience. Thus the grace which reached the apostle, and through him reached others (Gentiles), has the glory of God's Son in view. Man is not the end of God's dealings, but the means to that end. Under grace man becomes immeasurably blessed as God's aims are achieved through him. This note of sovereignty appears again in Romans 9. Paul and the converted Gentiles are vessels of mercy whose reason for being is the honor of the name of God's Son.

1:6. Among the Gentiles who have exhibited the obedience of faith are Paul's Roman readers. Though not his converts, yet they belong to a class of men who formed the focus of Paul's apostleship—namely, believing Gentiles. Thus, Paul here establishes his connection with them while reminding them of God's grace in constituting them the κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

1:7. Now the apostle returns to the basic structure of his salutation. Παῦλος (with intervening material omitted) πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ. Yet in doing so, the note of grace he has just struck is sounded anew. As the κλητοὶ of Jesus Christ his readers are also ἀγαπητοὶ Θεοῦ καὶ κλητοὶ ἁγίους—saints by calling. The new two-fold predication suggests by the sequence of ideas that the goal of divine love is holiness. God loves a man and, as a result, calls him to sainthood. Though this is his position, it sets the tone for his life as surely as Paul's calling as an apostle set the tone for his. In the light of such an experience of God's grace, the benediction which follows, though customary, takes on added force. Grace and peace are the two foremost appropriate wishes for those whom God loves and calls to sainthood. They are also the two wishes most likely to be realized for such people. (Cp. Jn. 16:33 for the Savior's legacy of peace independent of external circumstances.)

1:8-9. The very first thing (πρῶτον μὲν) Paul wishes to assure his readers of is his prayer interest in their spiritual life. Little reason indeed is there to expect a useful ministry to souls for whom we do not pray. To begin with, Paul is grateful for the vitality of their faith, news of which is everywhere published. Though they are not his converts, he rejoices, nonetheless, in the faith they have; nor need they doubt this, for (γράφ) Paul can call God to witness to the fact that he has a constant remembrance of them in his prayers. It is not surprising that Paul thus prays and gives thanks for the Romans since the God whom he invokes is One whom he serves in his spirit in the gospel. The gospel is not merely an external activity Paul busies himself with. His service (λατρεύω), which is a priestly work, is also in the sanctuary of prayer. It is a service of the spirit. Thus he is able out of a true affinity of spirit with God's interest in the gospel to praise God for the converts he has not won and mention these converts of others in his own prayers. Paul's service to God and the gospel was neither parochial nor self-centered. It was spiritual. Prayer is crucial to the success of the gospel, and those who really serve God in the spirit in the gospel will invariably engage in prayer.

1:10. As seems common with Paul, a grammatically subordinate participial construction begins a new direction of thought. While praying for them regularly, Paul always includes in his prayers a request to be allowed to come to them for ministry. This is the new subject. To pray for souls is to wish to serve them. It is often the pray-er who is allowed a part in answering his own prayer (cp. Matt. 9:37-10:1). Note the contingency of Paul's request—εἰ πῶς ἤδη ποτε—for even an apostle must rely on the wisdom and timing of God. A desire to minister to others is good and God-given and, if as so frequently, God honors that desire by fulfilling it, still God alone knows when and under what circumstances such ministry will be most fruitful. Little did Paul guess at this point that his ultimate visit to Rome would be in chains; yet such was the wisdom of God for him, with fruitful results such as Paul wished but could hardly anticipate (cp. Phil. 1:12-18). He prayed for a prosperous way to come to them (εὐοδωθήσομαι), and God gave it to him as a prisoner. The prosperity was spiritual, not temporal.

1:11. The desire for personal fellowship (ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς) with the objects of his prayer and the desire to be of benefit to them (ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν) are merged in Paul's heart as one desire. The man who asks God's gifts for men wishes naturally to be able to give some gift himself. To be attuned to God's generosity is to become generous; to wish to see souls in this spirit is to wish to share with them for their good.

1:12. Nevertheless, Paul does not proudly suppose that he alone has something to give. What he means to say (τοῦτο δὲ ἐστίν) is that he wishes to share with them the strengthening benefit of his own faith as they shared the benefits of theirs with him. Indeed, the very strongest of Christians can be encouraged by the faith of other believers and never reaches the place where he can gain nothing from his brethren in the Lord.

1:13. The depth of Paul's desire to see them and serve them is attested by the fact that often (πολλάκις) is emphatically placed—that often he had actually decided to come to them but was prevented from doing so. Given the multiplicity of his spiritual responsibilities plus the frequency with which he was persecuted, the delay was fully understandable; but the intention was there and this attested the desire. The fruit of which he speaks, the aim of his coming, may not be construed as an explicit reference to converts to be won by him; indeed, Paul never uses the term fruit in this way. The immediately preceding verse suggests that he is thinking in terms of the spiritual benefit his visit would bring. A similar concept of fruit seems to be present in Phil. 1:21-25 where Paul feels that to remain alive will mean fruitful labor, and he is thinking particularly of the Philippians' progress in joy and faith. Elsewhere, Paul uses *fruit* of the holy and beneficial results of Christian experience (cp. Rom. 6:21-22; 15:28; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; 4:17), and somewhat differently in 2 Tim. 2:16. No other uses of *fruit* occur in his epistles except 1 Cor. 9:7 as a discussion of material remuneration. It is probable, therefore, that Paul was thinking of the general spiritual results of his ministry in Rome and not only, or even primarily, of prospective conversions. And Rome is seen as a necessary complement to Paul's ministry. By a delicate transition of thought, Paul moves from his concept of his burden for the Romans to his obligation to them. He wants fruit among them, just as he had had it elsewhere among the rest of the Gentiles.

1:14-15. The reason for this is that he is a debtor to every kind of Gentile—those with Greek culture and those without it, those with earthly wisdom and those who lack it. That being the case, one can explain his readiness to preach also at Rome. He owes a debt there, as well. As

capitol of the empire, of course, Rome would be a locale unthinkable to pass by in a ministry designed to reach all the types of Gentiles. To pass by Rome in a Roman world would be inconceivable. But, in addition, as a cosmopolitan city, Paul would find Rome to contain as representative a cross-section of Gentile humanity to which he was a debtor as he could hope to find anywhere. It is no wonder that Rome loomed large in his evangelistic and missionary plans. Paul undoubtedly felt that this city was a necessary capstone to his Gentile apostleship. Note that Paul's evangelism is personalized as directed to his readers (ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ). No doubt the ὑμῖν is broad enough potentially to embrace the idea of you people who are in Rome, and, thus, to include the unconverted whom Paul would certainly try to reach. Yet the ὑμῖν does imply that he will gospelize his readers as well when he comes. This implies that his concept of the gospel is, in Romans at least, larger than the mere essentials of how to get saved from eternal judgment. In fact, as the epistle as a whole discloses, the salvation Paul's gospel proclaims involves deliverance from God's present wrath as well. Indeed, this is its main thrust as treated here and it is, therefore, especially appropriate to a converted audience.

1:16. Why not preach to them? (Notice the γὰρ – for.) After all, there is nothing to be ashamed of in the gospel. God's power in salvation is disclosed therein. Indeed, the gospel itself is that power. The salvation Paul speaks of is not here defined, but according to 5:9, it is salvation from wrath. 5:9 is the first reference to salvation after this verse, and since in vv 18ff. the subject of wrath is treated, we may conclude that 1:16 and 5:9 present the same conception of salvation. To be saved from wrath is to escape the temporal judgment of God whereby He delivers sinners to the bondage and corruption of their own sin—vv 18ff. It, therefore, involves a life of victory over sin. This is the σωτηρίαν for which the gospel is the δύναμις. In the course of the epistle it will be shown that the basic facts of the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—are the essential elements in the Christian's victory over the dominion of sin. The power of the living Christ who has triumphed over death is, by means of His Spirit, communicated to the believer for victory (cp. Rom. 8). Since the Spirit is received when the gospel is believed, the gospel thus carries with it His δύναμις for salvation.

Note that εἰς σωτηρίαν can suggest the aim or goal of the gospel, not merely its result upon believing. This idea accords with the future tenses (σωθησόμεθα, for example) that are used in 5:9-10 to describe what is logically subsequent to justification and reconciliation. Salvation then is something the gospel produces in the life of every believer who appropriates its power. Every believer has the power, according to this verse, but how that power is to be realized experientially is the great theme in this epistle.

1:17. Why the gospel can be and is God's power for salvation in the experience of the believer is here stated. It is God's power because (notice the γὰρ) in it is revealed God's righteousness. It will shortly appear from vv 18ff. that God's wrath from which the believer is to be saved is supremely justified by man's sin. For God to lift from any soul the experience of this wrath requires justification of its own. God is just in placing men under wrath; would He be just in removing it? This problem involves a discussion of the believer's justification by faith, to which 1:17 is the first implicit/explicit reference. The gospel is God's power of salvation from wrath because in it is disclosed the righteousness of God awarded to faith. A justified believer can, therefore, be saved from wrath. This is precisely the statement of 5:9. The phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν ought to be interpreted linguistically on the analogy of similar Pauline phrases like ἀπὸ

δόξης εις δόξαν (2 Cor. 3:18) and θανάτου εις θάνατον and ζωῆς εις ζωὴν (2 Cor. 2:15-16) where the εις construction denotes a further or final realization of the concept being discussed.

I might add that this point I'm making is denied by Arndt & Gingrich who see in the phrase no degradation. It merely expresses in a rhetorical way the thought that πίστις is the beginning and the end. But their quotation of a grave inscription reading ἐκ γῆς εις γῆν ὁ βίος οὗτος (“dust is the beginning and the end of human life”) hardly supports their view. The inscription clearly implies the completion of life's cycle so that the earth becomes man's destination as it also is his point of origin. So, in ἐκ πίστεως εις πίστιν as also in the passages from 2 Corinthians cited above, εις πίστιν suggests the final goal or destination with something of a cyclical nuance. God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel out of or by means of faith, and the intended end thereof is, in like manner, also faith. Thus, the εις πίστιν is roughly parallel to the εις σωτηρίαν of v 16. As the δύναμις Θεοῦ has as its aim or end salvation from wrath to everyone who believes, so the δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ revealed has its aim or end in faith. Moreover, the two aims are one. The σωτηρία is achieved only by πίστις. Since the salvation of which Paul speaks is effectual by the Savior's risen life (5:10), faith becomes our essential link with that life (cp. 6:8—Εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ). The reckoning of ourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God is all a process of faith and, indeed, Paul would have said that the entire experience of one thus joined with Christ is a living by faith (Gal. 2:20).

Hence, the righteousness of God bestowed on every believing sinner on the grounds of his faith (ἐκ πίστεως) is intended to motivate him to further faith—that is, to the achievement of that end made possible by the δύναμις of God in the gospel, namely, salvation from wrath. Paul will yet argue that justification points us to the purity of life which is its logical and natural consequence. This being a life of faith, it may truly be said that God's δικαιοσύνη has its aim or end in faith (εις πίστιν). His whole concept is epitomized by the quotation from Habakkuk (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, Hab. 2:4), but whether it be a question of life initially received or life experientially enjoyed, the basic principle is the same. It is ἐκ πίστεως moreover, it is the ὁ δίκαιος who so lives. By justification he becomes righteous and, thus, receives life, since justification is a justifying of life (cp. 5:18). But in the process of living the life thus received, he becomes as well on an experiential level a ὁ δίκαιος in the deepest sense. The quotation, therefore, is freighted with meaning. It is true both on the level of justification as well as that of sanctification. A righteous man, from whatever viewpoint he may be termed such, has but one principle of life—namely, faith.

1:18. The first major section of the argument of the epistle begins here. The basic thematic statements just made in vv 16-17 are now to be elaborated in extended fashion from here through chapter 8. The first step is to graphically present the need for the salvation Paul has just spoken of. Verse 18 introduces a major subsection which does exactly that. The first word of verse 18, ἀποκαλύπτεται, seems somewhat emphatic. The gospel, Paul has just said in v 17, is a message wherein God's righteousness is revealed. (Notice ἀποκαλύπτεται in v 17.) Now he speaks of the revelation of God's wrath. Notice that the stress on ἀποκαλύπτεται highlights the contrast, and it is precisely because man is so clearly under the divine wrath that he stands in need of a gospel of divine righteousness. Indeed, the wrath of which Paul speaks is directed against man just because his character and conduct are the direct opposite of the righteousness revealed in the gospel.

For that wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The terms used here—*ἀσεβειαν* and *ἀδικιαν*—seem close to each other in meaning, judging by other general New Testament use. Besides the obvious rhetorical advantage of the double assertion of man's wickedness, however, there may also be a subtle shade of difference between them. In that case, *ἀσεβειαν* will focus a bit more on the irreligious spirit of man while *ἀδικιαν* will stress the wrongness of his conduct—the former, of course, producing the latter. Man thus stands apart from the basic character of God as disclosed in the gospel, but, in addition to this, man is hostile to the truth of God. Hence, the revelation of God's wrath is said to be against the sinfulness of men who suppress (*κατεχοντων*) the truth in unrighteousness. It is serious enough for man to deviate from God's holy standards. It is even more serious for him to seek to hold back the truth of Him whose standards he has violated. But such is ever the tendency of the human heart. The man who rejects God's holiness in his own experience can scarcely bear to face the truth and, hence, seeks to hide it from his life. There are, of course, many ways in which this is done, but Paul has especially in mind man's headlong descent into idolatrous religion (cp. vv 21-23).

Idolatry, so far from being a partial apprehension of truth or a product of sincere search for reality, is, in fact, man's way of suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. That is to say, as man pursues his unrighteous ways, idolatry becomes the instrument by which he suppresses nature's overwhelming witness to the living God (cp. vv 19-20). Thus, taken as a whole, v 18 declares that God is angry with men because of their sin and suppression of truth. The fashion in which that anger finds expression—that is, in which it is revealed—will be detailed by Paul very shortly (vv 24-32), but more immediately he must point out that man is, indeed, suppressing self-evident truth.

1:19. That man really is restraining God's truth is proved by the consideration (*διότι*) that there is evident testimony to God in their very midst. The expression *τὸ γνωστόν* is equal, approximately, to the known thing. God's known thing, says Paul, is manifest (*φανερόν*) in men's midst. In fact, God Himself has manifested it (*εφάνηρωσεν*). Paul does not imply by this, of course, that all the information man might need about God falls under the category of self-evident truth. The phrase *τὸ γνωστόν*, in fact, may be taken to imply the reverse. There is something to be known about God that is available to all men, though by so much we might deduce that there is also a *τὸ ἀγνωστόν* as well. What Paul has in mind by *τὸ γνωστόν* is, of course, defined in v 20 as His eternal power and deity. That, at least, is knowledge which no man need be without because God has made it plain (*εφάνηρωσεν*) to all.

1:20. How God has made His *τὸ γνωστόν* plain to men is now stated. It has been done (note the aorist of *ἐφάνηρωσεν* in v 19) through creation. Indeed, ever since the creation of the world (*ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου*), the invisible realities about Him (*τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ* equals, of course, *τὸ γνωστόν τοῦ Θεοῦ*) have been transparently displayed to the rational faculties of mankind. These invisible realities are, in fact, visible (*καθορᾶται*) when men consider created things around them (*τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα*). To be carefully observed here is that the apostle does not take a negative view to a man's capacity to reason from the creation to the Creator. Indeed, it is of the very essence of the whole process by which God has manifested His known thing to men that men should have the capacity to see what is revealed. If they did not, no true manifestation would have taken place and no real grounds would exist on which to hold men responsible. But the responsibility of men is precisely Paul's point. Since God's eternal power and deity—that is,

His invisible things—are clearly perceived when rationally (νοούμενα) considered, man has no excuse for his ignorance (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους); and all such ignorance becomes willful ignorance and, hence, suppression of the truth. Man is not, therefore, ignorant because he cannot help but be ignorant, but because he chooses to be.

It should, however, be stated that man can go only so far in his perception of God as he rationally considers creation around him. The terms eternal power and deity suggest the limits of the discovery he can make. even the simplest of men is capable of considering the creation in which he lives in such a way as to draw the inescapable conclusion that it must have been made by Someone whose powers span the ages and whose essence is of a higher order than anything in the world around. Eternal power, therefore, and deity are amply attested by nature, but other realities are not. Indeed, the gospel Paul proclaims is itself a special divine revelation and in no way deducible from the natural world. But if men were but to recognize that perception of the Creator which creation affords them, they would then be in a position to search out the further will of their Maker. While they suppress, with their idolatry, the true witness of nature, however, no such progress is possible; for such suppression occurs precisely for the reason that man clings to his unrighteousness. Hence, man is culpable in his ignorance, hiding his eyes and heart from the clear witness of nature to the power and divinity of its Maker.

1:21. The words *without excuse* (ἀναπολογήτους), which conclude v 20, have not yet been fully explained. That man somehow suppresses the truth (v 18) as that truth is revealed in creation (vv 19-20) is plain, but the details of this suppression have not yet been given. This is what vv 21-23 will now do. Man is without excuse because (διότι) of what he has done about the natural revelation God has granted him. What he has done is now spelled out. The participial phrase γνόντες τὸν Θεόν, if translated “when they knew God,” may sound more historical than it actually is. Better, it might be rendered “knowing God,” or “having known God.” In the same way, the aorists ἐδόξασαν, εὐχαριστήσαν, ἐματαιώθησαν need not be handled by a simple past in English which sounds historical but can also be translated, “they have not glorified”, “given thanks”, etc. Thus the whole concept involved need not be traced to a historical time span such as would be involved in man’s fall from an original future revelation at the dawn of history into the idolatry of later centuries, though, of course, this need not be excluded. Rather it may be viewed as a statement about the failure of men at any point in history to respond to the clear light of nature with appropriate worship—that is, when they knew God through the light of nature—with the result that they settled down into the darkness of idolatry. On this understanding of the apostle’s statement, v 21 may be viewed as true of the race as a whole, or of individual nations, or of particular men; and, indeed, on all these levels, it is a valid affirmation.

Starting, then, from the premise that the creation mediates a knowledge of God, γνόντες insists on two initial failures of men, both negative in character. They glorified Him not as God, and they were not thankful. Stated another way, they did not render their Maker either the appropriate respect or the necessary gratitude. It hardly needs saying that the sequence is correct. Where there is inadequate respect, even in human relationships, there will always be inadequate appreciativeness. Men lose their thankfulness when they have little respect for their benefactors. To fail to glorify God is certainly the anteroom to a life of thanklessness. But the two negative failures are followed here and in vv 22-23 by five additional steps down—a total of seven in all. All of these five are positive assertions and trace in a sense the consequences of man’s lack of respect and gratitude. The positives and negatives together give a complete (seven) view of

man's appalling rejection of the revelation in nature. Indeed, the bottom step in this descending staircase is the worship of the medium of revelation rather than the worship of the revealed. Such is the degradation to which the unworshipped soul can fall.

Because, then, men did not respond to the knowledge of God so clear in the created world with worship or thanks, men became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. The expression ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν suggest the ineffectualness—the vacuity—of unworshipful man's reasoning processes. The phrase that follows, καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά, points to the utter loss of comprehension and discernment to which these vacuous reasoning processes led. Thus, even when man neither glorifies nor thanks God must a similar process begin, for the thankless heart cannot think of things aright. Indeed, if it is thankless, it is already thought of them wrongly. It must eventually lose whatever remnants of light it may yet retain. The empty reasonings to which an unappreciative spirit gives rise are the inevitable precursors of the deep darkness of heart; and the longer the process goes on, the deeper the darkness becomes.

1:22. Yet, strangely, benighted man is never so self-confident as when his ignorance is most deep. Thus, following the assertion their foolish heart was darkened is the indictment professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Two steps more are here: the first a claim to wisdom, the second a demonstration of folly. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2); hence, he may act foolishly. The history of our own nation is a recent commentary on Paul's statement, for it is the educated elite who profess the most wisdom in our contemporary society; but, at the same time, they so often offer the most foolish and absurd ideas and programs. Indeed, it often seems that common sense decreases in direct ratio to the amount of intellectual attainment. One of the best educated of nations in human history is today a land filled with every form of folly.

1:23. But the seventh step is the climactic one for man's failure to glorify and thank God through his useless reasonings and consequent loss of light. Through his proud claim to wisdom with its concomitant deterioration into folly, man comes to the ultimate folly—idolatry. It is to be noted that whereas the first step in the descending scale touched the glory of God (ἐδόξασαν), so also does the last step (ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου Θεοῦ). Having failed to render the glory which creation plainly testified was God's due, now they actually give that glory, exchanging it for a cheap and worthless substitute—the image of a creature. Moreover, in doing so, men descend a further distance in the process, moving from the image of a man—God's crowning creation—through the image of a bird which flies in heaven, to that of a creature walking on earth, to that of one that crawls on its belly (εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων...ἔρπετῶν). Further, it will be noted that the stopping place, ἔρπετῶν, suggests that creature through which man's sin first began and points prophetically to the worship of the serpent with which man's last idolatry will be linked (cp. Rev. 13:4; and see 12:9).

Finally, it is of interest to observe that out of the seven steps, the first two relate man's failure as Godward, the next four involve man himself, while the last is man's distorted use of the creation as an object of worship. God, self, the world—all out of focus through man's sin. Indeed, when God is wrongly viewed, man's self experience must be distorted and marred; then he misuses the creation itself over which he was to exercise headship. The extreme disorientation which modern man experiences on a psychological level, as well as his abuse of the natural world around, are

the natural effects of his failure to honor and thank his Maker. From not glorifying and not thanking, man precedes to the idolatrous limits of positive folly. Hence, the sequence is initiated by what is undone and leads to the worst in doing. What a man omits may often be the secret of what a man commits.

1:24. Man's inexcusable descent into idolatry has led to a dreadful consequence. Because of (Διὸ) that idolatry, God has turned him over to his own iniquity. It is evident that for the section embracing vv 24-32, the verb παρέδωκεν (vv 24, 26, 28) is crucial; for it is this verb which describes the ὀργή Θεοῦ which Paul has already declared to be revealed from heaven (v 18). Since that ὀργή was directed against men who restrain (κατεχόντων) the truth, it is appropriate that it should now be spelled out since in vv 19-23 the way in which the truth is restrained has been spelled out. Man, therefore, has become an idolater as he suppresses the testimony of creation. Therefore (διὸ), God turns him over to the sin which he loves but by which his experience of life is ruined. This is the theme of vv 24-32—God handing men over to ruinous sin, but within these verses a progression of thought is visible.

The first of the three assertions that God gave men up to something, here in v 24, relates that giving up to man's transfer of God's glory to the image of the creature (v 23). Verse 23 is the immediate background for verse 24. Of course, verse 23 is a basic statement that man has become an idolater, but it may also be viewed as idolatry in its initial phases (for example, the likeness (ὁμοιώματι) of a creature used to express or represent the glory of God). At this level, the idolater equates God's glory with its creaturely representation. The penalty for this, Paul declares, is man being handed over to an uncleanness (εἰς ἀκαθαρσία), leading him to the shameful use of his body (τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). Thus the punishment is appropriate to the crime; for as God's glory has been shamefully misrepresented, so man's body (here viewed as worthy of respect) is similarly reduced to shame. After all, then, man cannot render due respect to his own physical vessel if he fails to render due respect to the One who created that vessel. As he has cheapened his Maker's glory, so by immorality he cheapens his own. There is irony in the reality that when man represents God in corporeal form—whether in the likeness of man, bird, beast, or reptile—that his own corporeal existence is marred; but this is inevitable, for corporeal, bodily, physical existence has no real meaning apart from a transcendent reality that gives it that. When man loses his sense of a God who transcends all physical representation, man cannot avoid reducing his own physical experience to the shameful level of immorality. The sanctity of physical life is only maintained by means of a perception of a God who transcends physical life and who thus gives it its ultimate meaning and value.

1:25. The Greek word οὔτινες with which this verse begins is, on the level of formal grammar, subordinate to the statement of verse 24. But it seems to have here a slightly continuative force, as we might say, "who are the sort who"—that is, "who preceded to." In other words, the apostle seems to imply that mankind degraded to the level of shameful physical immorality was then capable of a further distortion of its relationship to God. The verb μετήλλαξαν here is a compound of the verb ἤλλαξαν of verse 23. It is probably to be thought of as somewhat more emphatic than the earlier verb, an impression that would assist the notion that verse 25 represents an advance over verse 23. Thus, whereas in verse 23 man is seen exchanging the incorruptible divine glory for the likeness of a corruptible creature, here he is seen exchanging the reality (τὴν ἀλήθειαν) of God for an unreality (ἐν τῷ ψεύδει). Thus, while verse 23 represents a diminution of God in which His glory is conceived of in creaturely terms, verse 25 represents an elevation of

the creature to a higher level than the Creator (καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν...τὸν Κτίσαντα). This, of course, in terms of reality is nothing but a lie.

The psychological insight provided here into the development of idolatry is worth noting. The original concept of idolatry is to represent the Creator's glory, but since this is done in terms of the creaturely image, the Creator recedes into the background of thought, and the creature is thrust forward. Hence, the image of an animal might be thought of, at first, as standing for God; but shortly the animal itself is of more concern to the worshipper than the Creator supposedly represented by it. Hence, the living animal whose image is an object of veneration becomes itself an object of veneration, rather than the Maker who gives it life.

From the standpoint of spiritual idolatry, when the heart diverts to an earthly object and away from God, that object will ultimately supersede God in importance. Thus, if a man, for example, lays aside some service to the Lord for the sake of family, the next step is for the family to assume a total importance greater than God—and so with any object which diverts us from true service, conceived of in the sense of the Greek verb λατρεύω—true service to our Maker. The initial diversion is a prelude to a new system of values in which God plays a permanently lessened role. At this point, the creature is paramount to the heart over the Creator. So, in America, because men have allowed material concerns to often divert them from true worship of God (a man, for example, misses church for business reasons), the material objects they strive for become more of a god to them than God; hence, America worships its own golden calf. In a society where the glory of God as Creator is relegated by the wise and educated to the creation itself, evolution articulates for some the mode by which God made the world, but for others the mode by which the world made itself. It is hardly surprising that man and the world around him become the measure of all things.

Verses 23 and 25 thus repeat themselves. First, the glory of God is conceived in creaturely terms (v 23). Second, the creature/creation supplants the Creator as the object of man's reverence and his attentions. Humanism in contemporary life is a spiritualized form of reverencing the creature more than the Creator, but man's misguided devotion does not, Paul suggests, really affect reality. No matter what man worships, the God of creation is εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. The ἀμήν thus constitutes a solemn affirmation of eternal truth over and against the temporal transient distortion of it for which man is culpable. Man may exchange God's truth for a lie, but the truth still remains as an eternal verity.

1:26-27. Following the second charge against idolatry is a second enunciation of God's wrath. Verse 25 then provides the reason (Διὰ τοῦτο) for the action of God in vv 26-27. Whereas the error of verse 23 appropriately led to the judgment of verse 24, the error of verse 25 with equal appropriateness leads to judgment in verses 26-27. If man distorts reality so that he changes God's truth for a lie, his penalty must be a distortion of his own experience of reality. This is precisely what is found in the description of physical perversion which verses 26-27 contain. Note that here a key phrase in verses 26-27 is τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν (“the natural use”) in both verses so that the concept of distortion/perversion is uppermost. It is also evident that the μετήλλαξαν of verse 26 recalls the same verb in verse 25, thus stressing the correspondence between the sin of verse 25 and its penalty in verse 26. The experiences of verses 26, 27 are described as dishonorable passions (πάθη ἀτιμίας), so that once again, as in verse 24, man's failure to honor God aright leads to his own dishonor. Few sins, indeed, are more shameful than

the ones here described. Moreover, as indicated in the phrase τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες, the dishonorable passion of verse 27 often carries with it an affliction men are usually ashamed to speak of, so that nature itself is so constructed that man's distorted experience of physical reality is appropriately repaid on a physical level. Of course, the same penalty may attach to the sins of verse 24, but its mention here is appropriate to the stress on actions contrary to nature. It is clear that if verse 25 represented a deterioration over against 23, the same may be said of verses 26-27 over against verse 24. Bad as immorality such as verse 24 describes actually is, the perversions of verses 26-27 are worse.

1:28. But a further step down the moral ladder is described in verse 28. First, man lowered his conception of God's glory to a creaturely level (v 23). Second, he elevated the creature to a level higher than the Creator (v 25). But, third, he seeks to dismiss God from his thoughts altogether (v 28). Not that in the verb ἐδοκίμασαν the concept of discerning is coupled with that of approving. Even as they did not discerningly approve of having God in recognition (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει), it is hard to accurately capture both nuances which belong to the verb. Man failed to discern God, but man did not want to discern God; hence, God faded from man's conscious attention and concern. Clearly this is the ultimate step down, whether for the idolater or any man. The idolater who is fully steeped in his idol worship no longer retains even a recognition of anything beyond his idolatries that is transcendent in character. When the glory of God is transferred to the image of a creature (v 23), it is, nevertheless, a divine glory man strives vainly to represent—if the verse is understood at its highest possible level (though, it may on another level be equal to verse 28, of course). And when the creature is served more than the Creator (v 25), at least the Creator is not altogether lost sight of; but in verse 28 He is. So, also, in contemporary life where the idol is not a statue but a creature; nevertheless, the ultimate deterioration is to exclude God from one's life altogether. Yet many do this on a practical level.

The result of this ultimate departure from the Creator is that God surrenders man to an ἀδόκιμον νοῦν. It is clear once again that the punishment corresponds to man's crime, and this is especially evident here because not only does νοῦν correspond to the cognitive elements in ἐδοκίμασαν and in ἐπιγνώσει, but also ἀδόκιμον is clearly cognate to ἐδοκίμασαν. Hence, man's banishment of God from his mental processes leads to a mindset that is both undiscerning and unworthy. Both concepts are present in ἀδόκιμον, the former mainly by the word play with ἐδοκίμασαν—the adjectives meaning especially “base, worthless, a thing to be disapproved.” The result of this base mindset is the doing of all manner of things which are unseemly (ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα). These are now detailed in the following verses.

1:29-31. The list of vices that the inspired apostle unfolds is probably the most extensive anywhere in Scripture. The opening words—πεπληρωμένους πάση—show the exhaustive sense in which Paul wishes to underscore man's moral depravity. The adjective πάση μεστούς (“all”) is doubtless intended to apply to the five feminine nouns that follow, while the concept of being full is picked up again by the word μεστούς when the construction is changed in the middle of the verse. Significantly, the total number of vices which men are thus said to be full of in verse 29 is ten, ten being the number of human responsibility toward God. Thus their total failure to be what God demands of them is highlighted.

There follows in the last expression of verse 29 and in verses 30-31 an enumeration of the degradation of man's character in which thirteen features are noted. It would have been better to

have ended verse 29 with *κακοηθείας* which is the last word depending on *μεστούς*. *ψιθυριστάς* inaugurates a change of construction and, hence, a new series. Since thirteen is the number of rebellion, this list shows the depths of man's revolting against the Creator's design for his life. Though perhaps no individual sin in the catalogue of vices in verses 29-31 strikes one as more unnatural than the perversions of verses 26-27, still the intensity and fullness of the list gives it an obvious advance over the former verses. In verse 24 man became immoral; in verses 26-27 he became perverted; but in verses 29-31 he becomes unimaginably depraved, a being from which any and every evil may be expected. Thus in terms of both the guilt of man (vv 23, 25, 28a), and in terms of his punishment (vv 24, 26-27, 28b-31), the passage is decidedly progressive from bad to worse. Man now is seen at the very bottom of his depravity, and he is there because he excludes God from the cognitive processes of his life and because the penalty for this is utter depravity.

1:32. But though God is no longer held in recognition, a consciousness of His judgment remains (*τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντε*). The verb *ἐπιγνόντες* suggests man's perception of the righteous standard (*τὰ τοιαῦτα*) God has laid down. This simply means that man is not really able to escape his moral consciousness and is always able to sense what is the appropriate retribution for human vileness (*τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν*). However he may thrust the thought of God behind him, the realization that sin cries out for punishment can never be wholly eradicated. Yet tragically he ignores this perception and not only perpetuates his own sin, but implies consent of attitude. In short, man commends and approves what he himself is doing. The result is an elevation of sin to a level of respectability among sinners, with the consequent ignoring of divine sanctions against it. This awful state is exemplified in many ways in our own land as well. It is an appropriate but appalling resume of the spirit of rebellion which the preceding list of sins has so clearly revealed. It is man's tragic effort to make evil a virtue.

CHAPTER 2

2:1. Whereas the apostle has just dealt with the question of man's unrighteousness (cp. ἀδικίαν in 1:18), he now takes up the question of man's self-righteousness. In every age and in every culture, there are those who moralize about the failures of their fellow man; and it is to such that Paul now addresses himself. The *therefore* (Διὸ) which opens this chapter is surprising at first glance. On the surface it might seem that there is nothing in the preceding verses to thrust guilt upon one who condemned men's sins (πᾶς ὁ κρίνων), but this is precisely the inference Paul draws for. If his picture of man be true, no one is exempt from its condemnation. Even the moralist is guilty, for he does the same things as those he censures (τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων). Indeed, there is probably not a person alive who has not somewhere, sometime, passed an unfavorable verdict on an act or deed of which he himself has been guilty. For most men, in fact, this is of relative frequent occurrence, so that whether it be in the office or shop, in the home or at social gatherings, one of the most common and popular topics is the faults and failure of others, many of which exist plainly in the lives of those who discuss and censure them.

But on closer inspection, it is possible to see a link between 2:1 and the preceding chapter that is even deeper than this. The apostle has stated in 1:32 that men, though aware of God's judgment about those things, both practice them and are pleased with those who practice them. The verb *συνευδοκοῦσι* is interesting in this connection, for while it surely points to the way in which men often defend and admire those who do evil and even seek their company, it may also just as well refer to the satisfaction men derive from the fact that other sinners exist. In short, man derives a perverse satisfaction from the failures of other men because therein he imagines he can make himself appear in a better light. In particular, this psychological motivation lies behind men's tendency to condemn others, for that tendency is a form of ego building. The condemning one feels thus superior to the one being condemned. But, Paul says, such a superior feeling is ill-founded and only results in self-condemnation (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις). What we condemn in others we are guilty of in ourselves.

The classic illustration of this in the New Testament is Luke 11:45-51 where the self-righteous generation of our Lord's day built the tombs of the prophets their fathers had slain, and in the process showed μαρτυρεῖτε καὶ συνευδοκεῖτε...πατέρων ὑμῶν (Lk. 11:48). By constructing these tombs, they thus called attention to their ancestors' errors. They were actually taking a perverse pleasure (συνευδοκεῖτε) in those errors. In the parallel in Matt. 23:30, this is accompanied by a claim to moral superiority to their fathers, but the Lord continues by pointing out how God will show them guilty of the same thing as they killed the prophets and apostles He sends to them in their own day. The passage is indeed an apt commentary on Rom. 1:32-2:3.

Man thus has an insatiable desire to parade the sins of others, but this desire springs from his own sinfulness and boomerangs back upon himself since he himself is guilty of the things he criticizes. Yet in the process, he shows that he is well aware of God's righteous estimate of such things. (Cp. οἴτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες in 1:32. Cp. also 2:15.)

2:2. Indeed, the only thing man really accomplishes positively by his self-righteous judging of others is to demonstrate his awareness of God's standards. It is of interest that when Paul says Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν, he does not use the word γινώσκω. Instead, οἴδαμεν is capable of suggesting an almost intuitive recognition of God's κρίμα. The

apostle is saying, in effect, “You who condemn others—you and I, that is, we—do indeed have an awareness that God’s judgment against such sins conforms to reality—that is, it is according to truth. I’ll admit,” says Paul, “that we share perception of this. But have you considered (Λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο) that you won’t be able to escape the punishment which your judging of others shows to be justified?”

2:3. Herein, then, lies an irony. Man’s quickness to find fault with others testifies powerfully to his innate recognition of right and wrong; and, thus, implicitly affirms the fact that God acts according to truth when He punishes men’s sin. No wonder, then, that men’s words will themselves become a basis for their own judgment in the day to come (Matt. 12:36-37). The noun τὸ κρίμα, while looking at the judicial sentence, seems often to focus directly on the outcome of that sentence and, thus, to be equal to the punishment (cp. Lk. 23:40; 24:20; 1 Cor. 11:29; Gal. 5:10; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 17:1; etc.). Paul is thus affirming that the punishment God metes out to sin is according to the truth, in that sin is a reality for which judgment is merited. Man’s own spirit of fault-finding shows how he condemns his fellow men. Daily, he ignores his God-given opportunity to repent.

2:5. But while he exhausts the richness of divine patience (notice τοῦ πλοῦτου, v 4), he is piling up an entirely different sort of treasure (θησαυρίζεις). His hardness and his impenitent heart are heaping up a vast store of divine wrath, which will someday be revealed. Like the sands of an hourglass passing steadily from one cone-shaped vessel to another, so the sands of divine patience are running out, and the grains of a coming wrath are accumulating. The wrath of which Paul speaks here is, of course, a different thing than which has already been revealed from heaven (cp. 1:18), but it is a wrath made more sure to men by the wrath already revealed. For man can see the wretchedness into which sinful men have sunk (1:24-32), and he passes judgment on others who fall into such wretchedness (2:1-3). Yet the final doom which must follow those who already stand under divine wrath, man ignores. Instead of fleeing to God in repentance to escape the wrath to come, he actually builds up the intensity of that wrath by persisting in his hardness and repentance of heart (κατὰ τὴν σκληρότητα...ὀργήν, etc.). Thus, the day of wrath, really the great tribulation, will be so much the worse because it has been so long in coming.

In such a prophetic foreview, the words ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων (note the singulars in v 5) take on a certain collective overtone. Though many generations of men have lived and died in their unrepentance, man accumulates, thereby, a sort of collective guilt; for each generation is heir to the previous generation’s experience and is culpable for not learning the lessons of that experience. Hence, the Savior could speak of one generation bearing the cumulative guilt of all (cp. Lk. 11:45-51). Of course, at any given point in history the ὃ ἄνθρωπε is contemporary man upon whom the day of wrath can potentially come. The day of wrath, Paul affirms, will be also a day of revelation of God’s righteous judgment. If we read καὶ between ἀποκαλύψεως and δικαιοκρισίας. The noun δικαιοκρισίας is said (cp. Moulton & Milligan) to stress the character of the Judge rather than the judgment; hence, the great tribulation will not only be a day of expressing God’s accumulated ὀργή, but a day of indicating that ὀργή as the expression of a righteous judge—the more so since He so patiently delayed it. This observation, of course, assuming the correctness of the emphasis Moulton & Milligan indicate. Man, then, who unrighteously condemns others, will at last be judged by a righteous Judge (cp. v 2 and κατὰ ἀλήθειαν, which may also be a contrast to man’s hypocritical judgment). Then man will reap the

treasure he has stored away. It will be justly his because he despised the treasure of God's patience.

2:6. The relative clause of which this verse consists (ὃς ἀποδώσει, etc.) introduces now a Pauline description of the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Having warned the self-righteous man of his peril in that approaching day, Paul now spells out (vv 6-11) in some detail the character of that day. The day will be particularly the time when men will get from God precisely what their works (κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ) deserve. It will avail the self-righteous sinner nothing to condemn others while doing the same things himself. In that day, not his self-righteous words, but his unrighteous works, will receive the reward that is their due. Yet in laying before self-righteous sinners the perils of that day and in emphasizing that only those who do what is good can expect divine reward, Paul does something more as well. Briefly, quite compactly, he surveys the events of that day in the sequence as they relate to various classes of men.

2:7. The first group of men to come before Paul's mind in connection with the eschatological day to come are identified as τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ. The phrase is a trifle ambiguous and might be rendered either "to those who by endurance in good work" or "to those who by bearing up in a good work"—that is, by seeing it through. In the first case, the stress falls on the general manner of life, persistence in what is good. But for this meaning in Paul, one would expect ἔργα. In the second case, the stress falls on the fact that the individuals involved have truly done something good. Perhaps the first meaning is most natural in context (at least the AV takes it this way), since Paul is talking about the kind of activity that has eternal reward as its objective (δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσι); but a view of the normal Pauline usage of ἔργα can hardly be excluded. Hence, Paul has primarily in mind the life firmly dedicated to the acquisition of eternal rewards, but his verbiage does not exclude any good work accomplished with such goals in view. Obviously, such objectives can only truly arise as a result of faith and, hence, the good work or works Paul refers to must necessarily be Christian good works. Thus, we may think of Christians who endure to the end in a life of well-doing, but we might also think of any Christian who has done at least one good work in hopes of eternal glory. (On this level, it is doubtful if any true Christian could be excluded entirely from consideration, since true faith is never totally without some positive results—cp. Lk. 8:13-15.) To be noted here in particular is the fact that Paul mentions no distinction between Jew and Gentile as he does in vv 9-10. Thus, we may think quite naturally of the rewarding of the Christian church whose destiny it is to be called out of the world just as the day of wrath breaks upon it (cp. 1 Thess. 5). It will appear in subsequent verses (8-10) that Paul's mind follows the general outline of the prophetic future as he recounts God's actions in rendering to every man according to his deeds. The Christian church has logical priority in Paul's thoughts as he traces the unfolding of the coming eschatological day. Thus the words of Paul in this verse succinctly suggest the true character of Christian living (καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ), its basic motivation (δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν), and its ultimate rewards (ζωὴν αἰώνιον). It must be kept in mind that eternal life is a gift if we think of it being received here and now, but a reward if we think of it being received in the future (cp. Mk. 10:29-30, with parallels).

In general, we may say that wherever the New Testament speaks of eternal life as something to be received, it is speaking of eternal life as a gift. Wherever it speaks of eternal life as something to be received in the future, it is speaking of it as a reward. The point, however, is when we put

New Testament theology together is that eternal life must first be received as a gift if it is ever to be received as a reward. If I do not have eternal life now, I will not have it then. I cannot, in fact, do anything that will earn the reward unless I do it as part of the experience of life now received as a gift. John 10:10, for example, speaks of Christ coming that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. Eternal life is not simply a static item but something that expands infinitely. For example, all that is accomplished in the life of an individual is a result of the life which he already has as a gift; that is to say, our parents give us our physical life. That life has tremendous potential. We develop it; we get the rewards of it; but it came to us ultimately as a gift. This illustrates the fact that whenever eternal life is really utilized so that we expand it and enter into it fully, we are always utilizing and expanding and fulfilling what has been initially given to us as a gift by God.

In capsule form, Paul suggests the kind of life he wishes his Roman readers to live. He will expound it more fully later in the epistle, and he points to the kind of reward they can hope to win. The self-righteous sinner who is the hypothetical foil for Paul's argument in chapter 2 is not such a one as the apostle imagines would live such a life. Indeed, it is the fact that he does not live it that puts him in grave danger (cp. v 5). But, after all, the "O man, whosoever thou art that judgest" is only an imaginary figure here. The Roman readers are real and can profit from Paul's description of possible rewards in the coming day as well as the reminder that the unrepentant self-righteous sinner will suffer wrath. So we're saying here that this capsule elaboration of the future, while it arises out of Paul's desire to show the hopelessness of the self-righteousness of man, is actually, of course, designed very briefly to present to the Roman readers who are Christians the possibilities of reward as well. It fits into the argument, but it serves their edification.

2:8-9. The second group to come before the apostle's thoughts are identified by the introductory words τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας, καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι...ἀδικία. These words identify the group as unsaved people, particularly the expression "disobey the truth." (Cp. 1:5 for faith as obedience.) The apostle evidently has in mind those who in contrast to the saved of verse 7 (ἐριθείας conveys an implicit contrast with δόξαν ζητοῦσι in v 7), out of self-seeking motives, refuse to submit to the claims of the gospel. ἐριθείας also carries a note of hostility, as its New Testament context proves, and thus fits well with ἀπειθοῦσι. These people, rather, adhere to the unrighteousness that they prefer. The language is strikingly reminiscent of 2 Thess. 2:12, and the apostle undoubtedly has the same people in mind in both places. The great tribulation—that is, the day of wrath of verse 5—falls particularly in the Pauline view upon those who have rejected the message of Christ's gospel because they preferred their sin. Such persons have no way to escape the retribution of that day.

The descriptive nouns with which Paul pictures men's experience of divine retribution are four in number—four being the number of revelation or manifestation (cp. the word revelation itself, of course, in v 5). Two of the words—θυμὸς, ὀργή—stress the attitude of God while two—θλίψις, στενοχωρία—highlight the experience of man in that day. The use of καὶ between each member of these pairs, but not between the pairs themselves, signals the distinction. The phrase ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν, etc., does not introduce a new group. The structure of verses 7-10 is determined by the ἐκάστῳ of verse 6 for which the dative phrases of verses 7, 8, and 10 form an elaboration, but rather reinforces the identity of the group under discussion. In some sense they may be said to include every soul who accomplishes what is evil among Jews and Gentiles. No one, then, is

excluded—that is, it is each one as stated in verse 6—but every individual sinner will experience his own portion of wrath in that day. Hence, the self-righteous sinner cannot suppose that he will escape (cp. v 3). The use of the term ψυχὴν is appropriate in view of Paul’s preoccupation with the earthly expression of God’s wrath in contrast to eternal judgment, and it is here almost equal to every living person.

Finally, it will be noted that in the tribulation, the Jew has a certain moral priority (πρῶτον) in experiencing the wrath of God. This is appropriate in view of his special privilege, a privilege renewed in that day following the rapture of the Church. Shortly, Paul will expound the Jews’ special guilt (cp. v 17ff.).

2:10. The third group the apostle has in mind is now mentioned. They are all who accomplish what is good (παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν), and, of course, even in the tribulation there will be many such, both Jew and Gentile (cp. Rev. 7). Here, too, the Jew has a priority and the reward of which Paul speaks is undoubtedly realized in the kingdom (δόξα, τιμὴ, εἰρήνη). It should be kept in mind that the day of the Lord, which is precisely what Paul has in mind by the expression “the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” in verse 5, is a period extending to the end of the 1000 years. This is made clear in 2 Peter 3 where, in fact, Peter seems to have Romans 2 in mind. Thus, as the great tribulation exposes the divine wrath, the kingdom exposes God’s righteous judgment on behalf of the godly; for it is then that He openly rewards them. Hence, too, when the kingdom is made part of the picture Paul is painting here, his survey is seen to embrace the three major events that are yet to come: the rapture, verse 7; the great tribulation, verses 8-10; the kingdom, verse 10. It can be noted that the godly of verse 10 are described with some difference from those of verse 7. There is, for one thing, no mention of eternal life in verse 10. This is appropriate if Paul is thinking in verse 7 of the rapture by which Christians are instantly transformed into their eternal condition; for while the kingdom is, in a true sense, an experience of eternal life, it must initially be less so for those who enter it with mortal bodies than for those who enter it with immortal bodies. So, too, the term ἀφθαρσίαν of verse 7 is dropped in verse 10 in favor of εἰρήνη. For those who enter the kingdom still living in earthly bodies, there is not an immediate cessation of all experience of mortality as there is for those transformed at the rapture; but there is an immediate cessation of the turmoil and disturbance of the tribulation. Hence, the saved of that period find glory, honor, and peace in the kingdom, with the Jew once again in a position of priority (πρῶτον). But the saved of the church age who have lived in a decaying corruptible world and have tasted this feature of it much longer than will the saved of the tribulation who taste more deeply than we experience of world turmoil will find the incorruption for which they long (ζητοῦσιν) in their experience of the kingdom. Thus verses 7 and 10, while similar (both speaking of glory and honor for the godly), are differentiated in a way appropriate to the experience of the different groups being discussed.

Here, I pause to say that the way I am looking at this passage, and the way I am understanding it, is that it constitutes a very succinct resume of the prophetic program as Paul understands it, that to be carefully noted are the points at which he distinguishes Jew and Gentile, but the first group which he speaks of he does not make this distinction. This implies that he is thinking of a group of people in which this distinction is immaterial, whereas in describing the tribulation, the distinction is important; and in describing the reward of those coming out of the tribulation, it’s important. I realize that this understanding of the passage is quite different from the way in which it is usually used, but the key to it, in my judgment, is the reference to men treasuring up

for themselves wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; and with this, the understanding that the word wrath in Pauline usage never refers to eternal judgment, but in all the passages where it occurs it refers to the temporal expression of God's judgment. Wrath is a key word in 1 Thessalonians in describing the judgment of the tribulation, both in chapter 1 where we speak of Christ as our deliverer from the wrath to come, and in chapter 5 where that wrath is described in connection with the coming of the day of the Lord. This is, in my judgment, the key to this—to understand that we are talking about the pouring out of God's anger upon an unrepentant man in the future concomitant with His reward of those who have pleased Him. In this connection, I say that 2 Peter is apparently alluding to this, because in the context of 2 Peter 3, Peter is referring to Paul speaking of these things, that God's longsuffering leads to salvation, etc. But the only apparent place where Paul does speak of it in quite that way is right here in Romans chapter 2. I note with interest that 2 Peter chapter 3 is discussing the day of the Lord and Romans 2 is discussing the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, which certainly indicates to me that 2 Peter understands the passage in this prophetic sense—not of eternal or final judgment, but of the judgments associated with the day of the Lord.

2:11. Finally, the apostle states the basis (γάρ) on which all of this will occur. God is resolutely impartial. The self-righteous sinner (vv 1-5) should fear this. Thus to the righteous God gives reward, and to the sinner He gives wrath; there is no respect of persons. But Paul knows only these two classes, though conceived of in three divisions corresponding to the prophetic future. He knows no such class as a partly godly, partly ungodly person who deserves some wrath and some reward. He will shortly prove that among the unsaved there are none righteous and that among the saved there are only the righteous—those justified by faith. Hence, when God deals without respect of persons with men, it will be predicated on the character they have in His sight. God does not punish unrighteous deeds He no longer imputes to men; that would not express His justice. Nor does He reward man's humanistic philanthropy as though it were a fitting substitute for believing obedience to God's truth. Indeed, without faith it is impossible to please Him. It follows, then, that the Pauline doctrine of justification which is about to be expanded must underlie his conception of these future actions of God, and his conception cannot be correctly interpreted or understood without it.

2:12. The apostle's mind has traversed the dealings of God with men from the rapture of the Church through the tribulation into the kingdom without mentioning these events specifically (though note θλίψις in v 9). He has, nevertheless, thought of them, as it was quite natural that he should do while discussing the eschatological day in which men will receive what their deeds deserve. But one great event in which men will come before their Creator in connection with their works remains yet to be mentioned. This is the final judgment which is for man the final event of the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (cp. v 5). In fact, the eschatological day begins with wrath (ὀργή) and ends with righteous judgment (δικαιοκρισίας). Thus, to complete his picture of that day, Paul must now discuss the last judgment. This he does in verses 12-16. It should be noted, however, that while the last judgment follows the prophetic events previously alluded to in the background of Paul's thought, it does not furnish exactly another point in how God will render to every man according to his deeds (v 6). The explanation of that is, strictly speaking, confined to verses 7-10, as the structure of the Greek with its repeated datives makes clear. After all, the point Paul basically makes in verse 5 is that unrepentant man is building up a treasure of wrath, but wrath and final judgment are not

synonymous. Wrath, indeed, does reward men according to their deeds. In a sense, so does final damnation, but this last state is more directly related to the fact that sinful man is without life (cp. Rev. 20). Therefore, verses 12-16 break the structure of verses 7-10. In fact, verse 11 breaks it and is a sort of summary of Paul's point in verses 7-10 as well as a proposition on which verses 12-16 may rest as well. Hence, the discussion of final judgment in verses 12-16, while it is in logical and chronological sequence to verses 7-10, is also a separate consideration. It does not pick up the theme of wrath from verse 5, but rather completes the earlier theme of τὸ κρίμα τοῦ Θεοῦ in verse 3. In fact, κρίμα is explicated both by the concept of ὀργή (vv 7-10) and by that of δικαιοκρισία (vv 12-16). The γὰρ which introduces verse 12 draws upon the assertion of verse 11. The impartiality of God will control His judgment just as it controlled His wrath (vv 7-10). Hence, in the final judgment, man will be dealt with on the basis of the light he has possessed. No favoritism will be shown to those deprived of law, anymore than it will be shown to those who possessed it. In the former case, those who sinned without law will perish that way. They cannot hope for exoneration simply because they did not have God's written revelation. In the latter case, those who sin in the law will have the law as an instrument of judgment. They cannot hope for exoneration simply because they had that law.

2:13. The latter point, implicit already in Paul's argument, is now spelled out. There is no justification for mere hearing of the law, only from doing it. As he will later show, on this basis every man must stand condemned (cp. 3:19, 20). Hence, the Jew can expect no προσωποληψία in the last day on the basis of his knowledge of God's will (cp. vv 18ff.), however much he may pride himself in that knowledge.

2:14. The γὰρ of this verse is rather subtle. It at once returns the Pauline assertion about the Gentiles perishing outside the law (ἀνόμως, v 12) and, at the same time, draws upon the statement of verse 13. In the case even of Gentiles it is true that οἱ ποιηταὶ τοῦ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται; for although they stand outside the law and will perish there, they are, in their own way, held responsible to be doers of the law and cannot otherwise claim justification before the divine tribunal. The reason for this lies in the fact that Gentile conduct often strives for the very objectives of morality laid down in the law—that is, ἔθνη... φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῆ. This natural moral impulse becomes its own law to them, ἑαυτοῖς εἰσι νόμος; hence, when the Gentiles fall short of their own inner moral strivings, they incur guilt not unlike that of the Jew who breaks the written moral code.

2:15. This only proves that the law of God is inscribed in the human heart as well as it was inscribed on the tables of stone long ago; but man's heart is, in his unredeemed state, very poor writing material. The tables of stone spoke of the permanence of God's law; however man's heart may lose its grasp on it. Revelation thus simply objectifies and makes permanent what, in the case of the law, was already innate truth. Murder, theft, covetousness, and similar vices have never commended themselves as right to any truly rational mind, but the heart of man is so corrupt that it can come to question and, indeed, deny even the most obvious realities—hence, the need for tables of stone. It is, however, the deed of the law Paul explicitly refers to here as being written on Gentile hearts. The state of Gentile deterioration is such that one can hardly say that any Gentiles has the whole law inscribed within him, but in any given case where the things of the law (v 14) are a heathen man's moral concern, in that particular case the particular work of the law involved is obviously still legible within him. This gives God ground then for assessing pagan lives and for measuring their conduct against standards their own behavior betrays that

they have. Moreover, supplemental to the law striving conduct pagans often exhibit—that is, they do the things of the law from time to time showing what their moral aspirations are—there is also the pagan conscience. God will be able to expose that conscience in the day when men’s secrets are revealed (v 16) and will add yet further evidence that the heathen man has fallen short of the innate law that is within him. But the exposure of conscience will not wholly rest on supernatural knowledge of the human heart, but will be more than adequately buttressed by recalling the reasonings (τῶν λογισμῶν) which pagans have had with each other (μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων) in which they both accuse and defend, thus displaying deep moral consciousness.

2:16. The connection of this verse is with verse 15, not as in the AV with verse 12. We should read, “who show the work of the law written in their hearts as their conscience bears co-witness and as their reasonings among themselves excuse or even defend, all this in the day when God will judge.” The connection of ἐν ἡμέρᾳ is with the present tense verb ἐνδείκνυνται for which the participles συμμαρτυρούσης and κατηγορούντων, ἀπολογουμένων function as contemporaneous actions. The result of this structure is to carry present reality (v 15) over into the future (v 16) as though the day of judgment will view the past as though it were present right then, a virtual scroll unrolled before the eyes of men. Paul means by all this, or course, that condemnation awaits the Gentiles who are judged in this fashion. He is simply addressing himself to the problem of how God can hold the heathen responsible for sin which they commit in ignorance of his written law. The result of the discussion is to show that God can find an adequate basis in the actions, thoughts, and words of the pagan sinner since the day will be one in which all of these things, however secret (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων) will be placed on review. The grounds they afford for condemnation will be ample indeed. Thus Paul is sure that the promise of judgment, which is a part of his gospel (κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου) and was to be executed by Jesus Christ (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [the phrase goes with κρινεῖ]), was valid. Behind the passage lies the same conception he had presented years before on Mars Hill (Acts 17:30-31).

2:17. The self-righteous sinner whom Paul has painted in very general terms in 2:1-3 and who is warned of wrath and judgment in 2:4-16 now comes more fully into focus. He is, by way of example par excellence, a Jew. Thus, the nation whom God had chosen to bear His name before men has become man’s supreme representative of self-righteousness. The privileges claimed by the self-righteous Jew are here enumerated as his Jewishness, his possession of the law, his relationship to God—all sources of self-confidence. Notice ἐπαναπαυῆ...καυχᾶσαι—all sources of self-righteousness and pride.

2:18-20. But not only does he claim privilege, but also what is not entirely separate, perception. The structure of verses 17-20 consist of six main verbs: ἐπονομάζη, ἐπαναπαύη, καυχᾶσαι, γινώσκεις, δοκιμάζεις, πέποιθάς; and this six-fold framework (notice that six is the number of man, less than perfection) details the proud self-righteousness of Jewish mankind. The subdivision into three and three points to the two primary features of human self-righteousness whenever and in whomever found—namely, a feeling of special relationship to God (v 17) and a feeling of special wisdom (vv 18-20). It will be noted that the claim to perception involves a strong authoritarian impulse (γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα –i.e., the one and only will), a firm conviction of superior powers of discrimination (δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα), and a feeling of personal uniqueness in relation to the rest of mankind (πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν, φῶς, παιδευτὴν, διδάσκαλον, etc.). Thus is exposed the psychology of self-righteousness and the distorted need for feelings of importance and authority on which it feeds.

2:21-24. Yet coupled with the proud authoritarian spirit of self-righteousness, there is often found the most disgraceful hypocrisy. For the Jew of Paul's day, this is now detailed in these verses. Strangely, the man gripped with his own spiritual superiority most often loses the capacity to gain personal instruction from the very truths he imparts to others. Notice ὁ σὺν διδάσκων... οὐ διδάσκεις, and, in consequence of this, he is often able to rationalize his own infractions in the moral code that he claims to uphold. Indeed, theft (κλέπτεις), adultery (μοιχεύεις), and temple robbing (ιεροσυλεῖς) were sins not extremely difficult to excuse for the Jew who might strike a dishonest bargain, divorce his wife on pretext, or exploit an ill-gotten sacred object from a heathen temple. The lines which his rationalizations might take were many and were the easier because he sensed himself superior to those whom he took advantage of in the process.

Even so today, out and out dishonesty and immorality have often found justification on the lips of those who claim to have holy and spiritual reasons for doing what they are doing. But the crucial question was not—as the self-righteous sinner always thinks—a matter of self-vindication, but rather a matter of honoring God. No amount of effort to justify oneself can atone for dishonoring God in the process, so the phrase “through the transgression of the law do you dishonor God.” The acid test was not so much what the Jew said about himself, but what the Gentiles said about God because of the Jew—“the name of God because of you is blasphemed among the Gentiles.” This proved the tragic emptiness of their proud self-righteousness; hence, not surprising our Lord Jesus taught His disciples so to live as to bring glory to their Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). When such a life degenerates into a desire that our own holiness be recognized, it is no longer holiness at all but sinful self-righteousness. The Jew had utterly failed in his calling to make God known.

2:25-27. Now no feature of his Jewishness was more a source of pride to the Jew than circumcision. It was this that constituted to him distinction from Gentile mankind. Being an external, it also served to blind him to his internal need. The history of man's religion is, of course, replete with instances where some ceremony or rite or ritual takes the place of inward purity and becomes in itself a support for man's self-righteous superiority. As such, it seems to buttress and confirm his feelings of being superior to others. This is what circumcision obviously did for the self-righteous Jew.

Yet the apostle now points out that circumcision can be annulled by transgression of the law (v 26). In saying this, Paul anticipates the truth of Rm. 8:4. (Notice here, τὰ δικαιώματα, and there, τὸ δικαίωμα.) Moreover, uncircumcision is so much raised to a superior level thereby as to be qualified to exercise a condemning function toward the circumcised Jew in the day of judgment. (This is what verse 27 says, and for the same concept, cp. Matt. 12:41-42; 1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 20:4.) So Paul places obedience before ritual, much as Samuel long ago had placed it before sacrifice. But more than this, the real significance of circumcision was its symbolic reference to the putting off of the sins of the flesh (cp. Col. 2:11), and thus disobedience to the law was a nullification of all that circumcision really stood for. Hence, it was truly equal to uncircumcision. Conversely, if the meaning of circumcision was purity from sin, obedience to the law constituted a man truly circumcised, whether he was physically so or not. In the same way, the meaning of baptism is newness of life, and the rite is in essence nullified by the man who returns to his old ways.

2:28-29. If, as verses 25-27 make clear, an external rite is valueless apart from obedience—a fact man has often forgotten (as witness Catholicism)—the reason must lie in the fact that inward realities are the essence of true religion. This is why man's self-righteousness is vain, for in it he overlooks his own inward defilement and majors on externals. But the real Jew is the one who is inwardly so—likewise, for the really circumcised person. Thus, verses 28-29 give the reason (notice the γὰρ in v 28) why Paul can pronounce the circumcised man uncircumcised, and the uncircumcised man circumcised. What a man is inwardly is the true measure of what he is truly before God. A ceremony, or even a racial connection like being a Jew, had value only as it corresponded to an inward gentleness which God alone could see and praise.

In verse 28, Paul anticipates truth he will later utter about the remnant according to the election of grace—the true Jew (cp. 9:6-8), while in verse 29 he has in mind the saved—both among Jews and Gentiles (cp. 4:12). Thus he finds the Jewish claim to righteousness inadequate and prepares the ground for a new conception of righteousness of heart and life which will be based on, and grow out of, the gospel he preaches.

CHAPTER 3

3:1-2. The apostle's words about the worthlessness of Jewish self-righteousness and, above all, about the inward character of true circumcision raised an obvious question: What advantage is there in being a Jew at all? Why be circumcised if, in fact, an uncircumcised Gentile may be counted circumcised by observing the righteous standards of the law? Paul's words almost seem to set aside the advantage of Judaism (v 2), but the apostle denies this inference by affirming that there are uncounted advantages to being a Jew (πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον—“much every way”). Indeed, the place Jews have attained in history, both as individuals and collectively, is so impressive that there is every reason to believe the truth of the affirmation Paul makes. Excelling in so many areas of human endeavor, the Jew gives evidence of having benefited from the discipline, the tradition, the motivation, even the diet which his religion has brought to him. But no matter how the achievements and significance of this race are accessed, they eventually point back to an asset which Paul relates as the fountainhead of all the assets (notice πρῶτον—v 2)—namely, their possession of God's word (τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ). For, indeed, all Jewish tradition, morality, solidarity, and even the prescribed diet, find their source in the Jewish Scriptures. Hence, whatever physical, mental, or moral advantages the race has benefited from are, in the last analysis, the result of the oracles of God.

But not only that, the Jewish advantage is also to be understood in terms of the influence of the Jewish Scriptures on the world at large—an influence which in terms of history, society, literature, architecture, art, and individual lives is beyond human ability to calculate. That the world would be a vastly different place without the oracles with which Israel was entrusted, the book of the covenant of which circumcision is the seal, would be a supreme understatement. But this may be mainly an enrichment which subsequent history has given to Paul's words, yet implicitly at this point, it is already here. The oracles are divine communications and are, thus, communicable. Hence, the advantages of circumcision and Judaism are both such as the Jews themselves may experience and such as they may be the vehicle of the world to experience. Thus, the advantages are indeed “much every way.” Whatever, therefore, Paul had uttered about the possibility of the uncircumcised man finding acceptance with God, this cannot contradict the historical asset that God has truly given in Israel.

3:3. But what about Jewish unbelief? Did that really nullify the advantages Paul has just insisted on? By ἡ ἀπιστία Paul thinks of the hypocritical wickedness of that self-righteous nation which he has just described, namely in 2:21-24. But probably also he thinks of this wickedness, not as a definition of ἀπιστία, but as a symptom, an evidence of it. If the Jew is a sinner, somewhere one must be able to trace a spirit of unbelief directed toward the very oracles with which he is so fortunate as to have been entrusted.

For Paul, of course, that spirit of unbelief is best seen in the nation's rejection of Christ, and in its rejection of the righteousness He can impart, to which these oracles bear clear testimony (cp. Rom. 4:3-8, with 9:31-33; etc.). Thus, the murder of the Righteous One, a flagrant violation of the law, is similar, though far worse, than those described in chapter 2. This violation combines in itself both the wicked self-righteousness and the unbelief which Paul has in mind in this segment of the epistle (cp. Acts 13:27). Hence, the transition from law-breaking in chapter 2 to unbelief in this verse is a natural one for Paul and reflects his coherent approach to the Jewish problem. They are what they are as self-righteous sinners because of their unbelief.

Thus, the problem Paul raises is whether the unbelief of Israel in its own oracles can annul (καταργήσει) the true religion (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Θεοῦ) which those oracles reveal. (Notice the play on ἀπιστία-πίστιν here, though the former is subjective and the latter objective.) Is that true faith thereby rendered ineffectual because the Jews (not all of the Jews, of course—certain ones, *τινες*) have failed to grasp and express its true import? (In fact, so badly have they failed to do so that the God of these oracles is blasphemed because of them—cp. 2:24.)

3:4. This verse gives the answer to this. The answer to this is emphatically negative (Μὴ γένοιτο); for even if the worse were imagined—that all men everywhere refuse the testimony of the divine oracles (the *τινες* of v 3 is a real state of affairs)—revealed truth would not thereby have no ultimate worth. In fact, God would be glorified because His truthfulness stood out so starkly against man’s falsehood—“Let God be true, but every man a liar.” In this phrase, no real equivalent from the modal form *Γινέσθω* exists in English, and its force here is not very well represented by “let God be true.” Perhaps better, if not at all perfect, would be “God must be true”—that is, the one effect which is sure, no matter how many men may disbelieve, is that God must be vindicated in His truthfulness and unbelieving man exposed in his lie.

The quotation comes from Psalm 51, and clarifies the thought and supports it. God must be vindicated (Ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς) in all that He has said, and must in the end triumph (νικήσεις) over every criticism that has been lodged against Him (ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε). And this includes the blasphemy of Gentiles, which the Jews provoked (cp. 2:24). The appropriateness of the quotation is borne out by the context of the psalm which is a psalm of confession. Behind Psalm 51 lies David’s great sin by which he, too, gave the Gentiles cause to blaspheme (cp. 2 Sam. 12:14). Yet David is prepared to acknowledge his sin so that the fault may appear entirely his own and God may be vindicated in His words of condemnation which came through Nathan.

But the principle involved is, of course, broader than David’s case. The revealed truth which shines from the oracles of God, and which condemns men’s sin must ultimately be vindicated as man is constrained to confess the falsity (ψεύστης) of his own thoughts and ways. Often man’s competent self-assertion and superiority of his own ways over against the commands of God is seen to be refuted by the course of events themselves. We might illustrate from the folly of progressive child-rearing techniques as over against the biblical demand for corporeal punishment of children, as well as many other things.

But since the psalm majors on an experience of confession by David, its broader application must find realization the future day when every man must confess to God (Rom. 14:11). God will be justified in His word when man at last admits his own guilt and sin, whether at the Great White Throne or at the Bema of Christ. Thus, God will be glorified for His revealed truth, despite man’s unbelief and disobedience at the present time. The blasphemy of the Gentiles will be overcome (notice the phrase again, νικήσης ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε) as they are constrained to confess the falsity of what they have uttered against God.

I might note that Paul here follows the Septuagint rendering whereas the Massoretic text reads, “You shall be blameless,” or “You may be clean when You judge.” But perhaps the Hebrew, *תְּבָרַךְ*, should be read, somewhat exceptionally, “in judging You”—that is, “when You are judged.” The reference then would be implicitly to Gentile blasphemy of God for David’s sin

and the triumph of vindication which must result when David accepts full blame on himself. The Septuagint may thus be paraphrasing וְיִבְרָכְךָ by νικήσης.

Thus when man's confession is made in that eschatological day, God truly will appear true, and sinful men will appear as liars. It is the ultimate vindication of His word; the oracles of God which enshrine the faith of God will be vindicated in the day of judgment.

So, as more or less of a summary, we may say that in verses 1-4 Paul argues, first, that the potential acceptance of the uncircumcised does not annul real and tangible true, Jewish, advantage since they are the trustees of God's word. But, second, that even if their unbelief were complete, the advantage of revealed truth would lie in its ultimate vindication to the glory of God. The revelatory nation has a distinct privilege; but even if this is cast away, the revelation itself will be the medium of God's final exaltation as the God of truth.

3:5. Yet the assertion Paul has just made—that God's truth will be vindicated despite man's sin—raises a new problem. If evil ultimately leads to the commendation of good (συνιστησιν), how can God fairly punish man for that evil? If His own righteousness is magnified by man's unrighteousness, surely His anger focused against sin is not justified, or at least men might imagine it so (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λεγω). To be noted here is the fact that Paul speaks of God's wrath as a concrete punishment being brought to bear upon sinful man (notice the phrase, ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν). The issue then is whether there can be a legitimate expression of divine displeasure against an unrighteousness that ultimately serves the divine glory. Paul so phrases the question as to suggest the impossibility of the thought. (Notice the Μὴ and compare Μὴ γένοιτο, v 6. Yet the phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λεγω probably implies he had heard the argument somewhere. Indeed, given the pressures toward immorality which the early church experienced, of which gnosticism was a theological philosophical expression, it is altogether probable that this piece of sophistry was already current in Paul's day.) God, it might be said, cannot justly deal out retribution for sin. (This point, in fact, is a popular conviction in liberal circles today, though differently justified.) But sinful man has ever desired to believe on any available grounds that punishment of sin is somehow wrong. Today a criminal is more often regarded as sick, rather than sinful.

3:6. Paul's answer is emphatically negative (Μὴ γένοιτο), and his rebuttal is in the form of a question: If God cannot punish sin, He cannot judge the world. The implication behind this thought is that judging is a basic function of God, which it is inconceivable to deny. Thus, any inference from any set of facts whatever that contradicts this basic premise is automatically rendered invalid. How shall God judge the world? raises an insoluble problem for those who deny the validity of judgment. A judge with no power to punish is no longer truly a judge.

3:7. Now the apostle raises the same question again from a slightly altered perspective. If man's lie leads only to the magnifying of God's truth, and this, in turn, to His own glory, how can man even be called a sinner (τί ἔτι...κρίνομαι)? This is somewhat of an advance over verse 5. In verse 5, the implication is that sin cannot be fairly punished, but here the implication is that the sinner cannot fairly be called a sinner. Hence, verses 5 and 7 articulate the two fondest desires of the corrupt heart—namely, to get rid of the certainty of punishment and to get rid of the feeling of guilt. The former is, in a sense, the minimal desire, while the latter one is the maximal desire. If sin can no longer be called sin, of course, judgment cannot be expected. But then also even the sense of unworthiness which man feels, whether judgment seems to threaten him or not, is

thereby (at least, hopefully) removed. Hence modern man denies the reality of judgment *and* the reality of sin.

(Here it might be observed that Paul speaks again of man's lie (τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι) as over against God's truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ Θεοῦ), but he surely has in mind, as a parallel with verse 5 indicates, not merely what is accurate and what is false, but in fact all of man's behavior, whether in word or deed, which is contrary to reality—a reality which finds its source in God. For, from the Pauline, and indeed the entire biblical, perspective, sin is always an error and righteousness is doing the truth.)

3:8. This is the ultimate distortion to which the false assertion of verse 7 leads—that is, that man ought not to be condemned as a sinner, but ought to do what is called sinful (τὰ κακὰ) because only good can come from it—that is, God will be glorified in the end. (At this point, the sophist may not even be concerned that the τὰ κακὰ be called good. All distinction between good and bad is irrelevant if τὰ κακὰ produces τὰ ἀγαθὰ. In its most depraved form, man deliberately seeks known evil, whether to gain wisdom, power over the forces of evil, or just mere pleasure. He still refuses to acknowledge that he is a sinner for doing so. Why am I still judged a sinner—v 7?)

Paul affirms indeed that his own words have been twisted either to mean this or to justify it. For the sinner whose heart is hard listens to the truth only to resist it, finding perversely some excuse in it for doing what he is determined anyway to do. Many of God's servants, like Paul, have seen their words similarly distorted. (The Greek construction of v 8 is difficult and seems to be a combination of “We shouldn't, nay, do evil that good may come, should we?” and “we do not say, do we, ‘nay let us do evil that good may come’”? That is, this scurrilous suggestion that is put on our lips is not actually the true state of affairs, is it?)

Paul's brief rebuttal, ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικον ἐστίν, which is about equal to, “they deserve the punishment they will get,” is rebuttal enough for so perverse a distortion of truth. There is a point at which man's twisting of reality is so obviously false and self-condemning that it is beneath the dignity of the truth itself to refute it in detail.

3:9. The extended discussion of the character of man begun by Paul as far back as 1:19 is now coming to a conclusion. In particular, Paul is, at this point, concluding his consideration of the claims of the self-righteous Jew. Having charged the Jew with hypocrisy in sin (2:17-29), in 3:1-8 the apostle has maintained that while Jewish sin cannot nullify Jewish privilege since God will be inevitably glorified in the end (3:1-4), this fact at the same time cannot be distorted to justify that sin (3:5-8). This leaves the situation plain. Without downgrading the unique status of Israel as the vessel for the oracles of God, Paul leaves the individual Jew no special protection from the divine judgment. This is probably the point in view in the difficult expression, τί οὖν προέχομεθα. The τί οὖν on this view will mean approximately, “what is the conclusion of it all?” And προέχομεθα will be, “Do we Jews have an advantage?”—that is, “is there anything we can hold before ourselves for protection from God's wrath?”

The answer is emphatically negative (οὐ παντός). In supporting this conclusion, Paul alludes to his previously clear assertions (προηρτιασάμεθα) that both Jew and Gentile are guilty. (Cp. Rom. 1:18-2:24, and especially 2:6-12.) He has dealt with the question of Jewish privilege (2:25-3:8), simply to sweep away the objections to a point already made—namely, Jew and Gentile stand

under the guilt of their sin (ὕφ' ἁμαρτίαν). All men (πάντως) are thus reduced to the same level of desperate need. (I might comment here that προέχομεθα, which is much discussed as to its meaning, I take to mean, "Do we have an advantage as Jews that will protect us from the judgment of God?" And Paul's conclusion is, "No, we don't, because, just as I've said before, everybody's under sin.")

3:10-11. To drive this vital point home, once and for all, the apostle now appeals to the law—the Scripture itself. His accusations against all men are, in the final analysis, confirmed by the testimony of the word of God. No single Scripture is here alluded to, but we have rather a sort of catena of Scriptures. We might compare Ps. 14:1-3; Ps. 53:1-3; Eccl. 7:20; Ps. 5:9; Ps. 140:3; Ps. 10:7; Isa. 59:7-8; Prov. 1:16. Thus we hear the agreed voice of the Old Testament through verses like Ps. 14:2 and 53:2. While not specifically quoted, they are especially important in showing that Paul's sweeping application of this negative judgment on man accords with the spirit of these two psalm whose words come through so clearly here. The apostle's condemnation is really no broader than that of the oracles of God which Israel had and to which he now appeals.

The collection of Old Testament citations in verses 10-18 is a portrait of man as he really is. It has two major subdivisions—namely, verses 10-12 and verses 13-18. In the former verses, the stress is largely negative and man's deficiencies are exposed. In the latter verses, the statements are mainly positive descriptions and focus on man's depravities.

The errors in which man falls short of what he ought to be are the following: He is deficient in terms of basic character (οὐκ ἔστι δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς). This deficiency is explicitly universal (3:11). As a natural consequence, as well as a concomitant of this, he is deficient in spiritual intelligence (οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων). And, as a result, is deficient in the true essence of religiosity (οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν). Whatever his religious inclinations, these do not manifest themselves in a diligent pursuit of a genuine knowledge of his Creator. (Notice the intensive form, ἐκζητῶν. I'm taking the ἐκ here as perfective in force.)

3:12. But such a pursuit, having been abandoned, other pursuits occupy him so that he is deficient in his goals and ambitions (πάντες ἐξέκλιναν). Many pathways have turned men aside, like so many straying sheep, but the one things all have in common is their abandonment of the true way in which God is genuinely sought. Wealth, pleasure, fame are but a few of the countless by-paths into which men have turned. The result, inevitably, is that man cannot only do himself no good, he can do no real good for others. He is thus deficient in terms of true worth and usefulness (Ἄμα ἠχρειώθησαν)—altogether unprofitable. In fact, he is not even really kind (notice χρηστότητα), and is thus deficient in true goodness (Οὐκ...χρηστότητα). Indeed, those specific acts of generosity and kindness are done even by unsaved men. In the final analysis, every man is not only capable of, but actually does, deeds that are utterly unkind when truly confronted by a choice between his own interests and that of others. So, it is when considered in this light that one sees the basic selfishness of every man is a reality and that the truth of the assertion, "there is no real doer of kindness," is a universal truth. In other words, what I have said in this section is that man may do deeds of kindness, but that it is the nature of man, when confronted with the real issue that compels a choice between a deed of kindness and something that serves his own vital interests, his habit is to choose what serves his own vital interest.

3:13. But man is not only less than he ought to be, he is also much that he ought not to be. The apostle now comes to man's depravities. To be noted here is the stress on various parts of man's

body—his throat, tongue and lips, his mouth, his feet. (His feet are implied by ὁδοῖς and ὁδὸν in vv 16 and 17, and his eyes, v 18.) By inference, we glean that the members of man’s body are the vehicles through which his sinfulness comes to reality, and this prepares the ground for the conception that these same physical members can become instruments (ὄπλα) of righteousness in those who are indwelt by God’s Spirit. (Here, cp. Rom. 6:13, 19; 8:9-11).

To begin with then, man’s throat is like the entranceway into a vast burial cave from which the sealing stone has been rolled away. Their throat is an opened tomb, Paul says. The implication being that his corrupt words, which come out of the throat, are like the stench of an open sepulcher, the unmistakable evidence of death within. Hence, the deceit (ἐδολιοῦσαν) and venom (ὁὸς ἀσπίδων), which men’s words so often unfailingly contain, are the marks of his spiritual deadness. They are also the marks of his relationship to Satan, the father of deceit. (Cp. Jn. 8:44 and “serpent.” Here I’m thinking of ἀσπίδων, whose guile produced that deadness.)

3:14. So, too, is the cursing and bitterness with which man’s mouth is full, the fault which is climactic in this series dealing with man’s words. The deceit and poison man uses at last suffice to make his mouth full of unpleasantness. As one lie leads to another, and one poisonous utterance to another, the attendant consequence to men’s relations to each other as well as to themselves, culminate in filling his vocabulary with harsh and bitter expressions. The story of Peter’s deceit in denying his Lord, culminating in a mouth of both—full of cursing and bitterness, resentment toward those who were probing him—furnishes, of course, a microcosm of this reality.

3:15. But words are often catalysts to actions (cp. Jas. 3), and the apostle now moves to describe these. The bitter, cursing mouth contains an implicity of murder (Matt. 5:21-22), and the man who is filled with the former may soon fulfill the latter. The expression “swift to shed blood” refers particularly to the frequency with which men engage in such acts and is a statement effectively commented upon by every daily news report.

3:16. Murder is bad enough, indeed, but the ruin man causes cannot be confined simply to the taking of life. Rather, the feet that pursue the blood of other men are following a path (ὁδοῖς) strewn with shattering consequences (Σύντριμμα, cp. συντριβῶ, “to crush”) and strewn with attendance of our own wretchedness (ταλαπωρία). The taking of life leaves behind it untold human suffering, though man’s ways are still full of destruction and misery, even when no blood is shed. (What I’m thinking of here is the fact that not only does the taking of life leave behind it misery, but even when no life is taken, man pursues courses that bring all sorts of misery, unhappiness, destruction.)

3:17. The taking of life and the production of ruin and sorrow are, in fact, the product of man’s latent inability to get along with his fellow man (“the way of peace they have not known”), and there are few unregenerate men who are on civil terms with everyone they know. Hence, the series of statements in verses 15-17 proceeds from the narrower crime to the broader realities that lie behind it (v 16 being less broad than v 17, but more so than v 15).

3:18. But a supreme reality furnishes a capstone to all Paul has to say here, utilizing Old Testament thoughts; and this reality explains in the most sweeping way why man is so depraved, as verses 13-17 portray him as being. He lacks that basic spirit of awe and reverence for God that issues in obedience and, hence, his corrupt words and destructive deeds are the proof of this lack, as the lack itself is the cause of that.

3:19. The catena of Old Testament quotations has been used by Paul to seal decisively his indictment of all mankind. The Jews have been first to acknowledge that these utterances suitably described the Gentile state of sin, but the apostle points out that obviously the law is primarily addressed to its recipients—to those in the law (τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ). It follows then that they serve effectively to silence the Jewish mouth (ἵνα...φραγῆ) and to reduce him to the same level as the Gentile, thus placing the whole world in a position of guilt before God.

3:20. In the process, Paul has proved a fundamental point. If the law of God even silences those who felt so strongly that their possession of it gave them special claims before the God of the law, it must be evident that there is no hope for any man, Jew or Gentile, to find acceptance (notice δικαιωθήσεται). No man can find acceptance before the divine tribunal by the law. The word δότι draws the inevitable deduction to which Paul's quotations from the law pointed. The law condemned all men, especially those who had it. Therefore, no flesh could claim to have measured up to its requirements and, hence, no flesh could be acquitted under the law. All that the law had really accomplished was to expose man's sin. The words διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας are at once an expression of the law's actual effect and also the divine intent in giving it (cp. Rom. 5:20 and Gal. 3:19-24). God never intended man to be justified by it, but rather to be driven to a sense of his need of the righteousness of Christ.

3:21. The second major movement of the epistle begins here. In 1:18, Paul had spoken of the wrath of God as being revealed (ἀποκαλύπτεται) from heaven, and the material up to 3:20, in effect, justified that wrath. Now, however, something else is revealed (πεφανέρωται)—not wrath, but righteousness. Having concluded that man has no righteousness of his own (3:9-20), Paul is now able to point man to God as the only possible source of righteousness. This, then is a δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ which is apart from (χωρίς) the law. Yet though the law has nothing to do with the impartation of this righteousness, it is, nevertheless, not an innovation or a new revelation—that is, the righteousness is not an innovation or a new revelation. Rather, the very law that condemns men as sinners testifies with the prophets to another kind of righteousness which is the righteousness Paul is now speaking of. That is my interpretation of the phrase, “being witnessed to by the law and the prophets.” (Notice that in chapter 4 Paul will deal with this Old Testament witness of the doctrine of justification by faith.)

3:22. The righteousness that has been manifested is one that is imparted by faith (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) in contrast to ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (v 20) and is the subject of a universal offer (εἰς πάντας), while it is actually bestowed upon all who exercise this faith (εἰς πάντας καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας). (Here I take the τοὺς πιστεύοντας as a modification only of the second—πάντας, so εἰς πάντας is absolute.) It is unto all—that is, for everybody—and it is actually upon everybody who believes. Thus it knows no restrictions, racial or otherwise, in the scope of its availability; and its actual possession requires nothing but faith, that men of all races and conditions can exercise. Special privilege is totally excluded.

3:23. The reason for this is found in the fact that God has leveled all men (Οὐ γὰρ ἐστι διαστολή—“there is no difference”), a leveling which is predicated on their universal sinfulness (πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον). Hence, all men stand on a plain far below the standard of divine glory (ὑστεροῦνται...τοῦ Θεοῦ). The fact of their sin has placed them there and has left them no other means of acceptance with God than on the basis of His mercy expressed in righteousness freely given.

3:24. The participial construction δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ asserts the principle universal in application which applies to the “all who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” It does not, of course, suggest that all will be saved. Since both Jew and Gentile without distinction (Οὐ...διαστολή) are now under the condemnation of their sins, Jew and Gentiles are, as a matter of principle, justified freely by divine grace, likewise without distinction. The διαστολή applies both to the question of guilt and to the manner in which men are justified. In both respects, distinctions do not exist, but the free bestowal of righteousness is founded on the paying of a price by someone else, and is only possible διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως...Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. In the Pauline manner, the sentence structure is unbroken, but a new turn has been taken in the thought. The gift of righteousness (cp. δωρεάν) could not have been offered or imparted if violence was thereby done to the holiness and justice of God. Redemption is the vital medium through which (διὰ) this gift must come; for, otherwise, such a gift would clash with the character of God. The implications of this reality are the subject of the next verses.

3:25. The One who has made redemption has, in the process of this accomplishment, become a public vindication of God’s righteousness in dealing graciously with men’s sin. God has, in fact, set Him forth (προέθετο) as a place of propitiation (ἰλαστήριον), visible and accessible to all. The term ἰλαστήριον renders the Hebrew word for the mercy seat in the Greek Old Testament. The typological imagery of the mercy seat must surely be in Paul’s mind. Whereas the Old Testament mercy seat was hidden from human view, in Christ the place where man and God may meet has been publicly set forth. Bear in mind the veil was rent at the death of Christ, making manifest what was not previously so (cp. Heb. 9:8). Thus Christ provides the only true point of contact between sinful man and a holy God (cp. Jn. 14:6), and this blood-sprinkled meeting place (ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι) is now open to public view and accessible by faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως). As such, it furnished proof (ἔνδειξις) that God has been righteous in passing over (πάρεσις) in mercy the sins done prior to the cross (τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων), dealing with men in forbearance (ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ), rather than in judgment.

3:26. But a particular moment is the proof (πρὸς ἔνδειξις) which, it offers for the present time that God can be both righteous and at the same time can declare righteous any believer in Jesus. Thus the ἰλαστήριον now on display in the proclamation of the gospel is a vindication of God’s character in both the past (v 25) and the present (v 26). God and man can meet in Christ as man exercises faith in Christ, and the gift of righteousness God imparts can be given without reflection on God’s holiness because of the blood (ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, v 25) which sprinkles the ἰλαστήριον.

3:27. All of the material in verses 25-26, crucial though it is, is a part of a subordinate construction which has further elaborated the principle that all (πάντες, v 23) are justified freely (v 24) by God’s grace. Verse 27 returns to the major thought of righteousness without the law which is unto all and actually upon all them who believe. It is the fact of such a righteousness that prompts the exclamation: where then is boasting? The answer is inevitable. A righteousness like this locks out (ἐξεκλείσθη) all boasting. If the righteousness were attainable by a works law (ἔργον νόμου), boasting would obviously be conceivable; but salvation obtained by a law of faith (διὰ νόμου πίστεως) must necessarily exclude it.

(The concept of the law of faith is striking. The term law suggests that faith is both the governing principle in man’s relations with God and also that it is a requirement, apart from which man

cannot find acceptance with God (cp. Rom. 14:23 and Heb. 11:6). As the law of gravity governs man until superseded by a higher law, so the law of works has been superseded by the law of faith. The former brought man down to condemnation; the latter lifts him up to justification.)

3:28. The words λογίζομεθα οὖν, which equal “we hold therefore,” draw upon the thought of the law of faith. The apostle sees that law as an inviolable principle which cannot be nullified by the intrusion of the deeds of the Mosaic law. He has established the fact of man’s guilt (1:18-3:20) and has asserted the availability of righteousness by faith (3:21-25), and he wishes now to affirm the total exclusion of boasting by virtue of the total exclusion of law-works from the experience of justification. This is the law of faith.

3:29. The fuller elaboration of this exclusiveness awaits chapter 4, but just now he raises, somewhat parenthetically, the thought that if the law were essential to salvation, God would almost be restricted to being the God of the Jews only; but, as even the Jews acknowledged, He was God also of the Gentiles. But since only the Jews had the law, it was rational to suppose that another method must be available for men to find acceptance with God, which would have universal relevance.

3:30. Such a method Paul finds in faith which is at once the source (ἐκ πίστεως) of Jewish justification and also the medium (διὰ τῆς πίστεως) of Gentile justification. The principle, or the law of faith, is thus supported by the fact that one God (εἷς ὁ Θεός) is the God of all men.

3:31. So far from this principle—namely, the law of faith destroying the validity of the law—the law of faith actually establishes the validity of the law; for if the law were to be the means of justification, its standards would have to be lowered, since no one has fulfilled them. The very process of lowering those standards would vitiate the law (καταργούμεν) because it would treat lawbreakers as though they were lawkeepers. But introducing a new principle—namely, the law of faith as the means of justification—leaves the law’s standards untouched. Indeed, since the infraction of those standards has called forth the propitiatory sacrifice which pays for them and which becomes the rationale underlying the bestowal of righteousness by faith, the law is actually thereby vindicated and reaffirmed as valid (notice the verb ἵστημεν). In fact, the two tables of stone inside the ark beneath the ἱλαστήριον symbolize the only possible way God could preserve (notice the play on the word “preserve” here) the righteous requirements of the law and still meet graciously with sinners. He must do so over a blood-sprinkled mercy seat which, in this passage, is the Savior Himself, where the blood intervened between Him and the law whose standards He could not lower. (So notice I’m drawing here upon the typology of this.)

CHAPTER 4

4:1. The law is established by Paul's gospel. Since its righteous claims are in no way diminished as they would be if the guilty could be justified somehow by works, but Paul's gospel establishes the law also in the sense that it fulfills Old Testament anticipation's of that gospel. Indeed, the righteousness of God, which is imparted by faith, is, as Paul has affirmed (3:21), borne witness to by the law and the prophets. That witness is now to be elaborated.

Paul begins his discussion of the Old Testament witness to the gospel by asking what Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, has achieved on the level of the flesh. (The phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* is to be taken here with *εὕρηκέναι*.) Since law works are an achievement of the flesh in Pauline thought, if Abraham were justified by means of them, he would have found (*εὕρηκέναι*) a substantial benefit on a fleshly level.

4:2. Indeed, he would be able to boast in that case (*ἔχει καύχημα*). The form of the condition intimates that it is quite conceivable to Paul that Abraham was justified by works (notice the first class condition). This may reflect his acquaintance with the form of teaching found in James' epistle, but if so, Paul insists that boasting could not possibly be in the direction of God (notice *πρὸς*, "pertaining to"). The type of justification that James is talking of is before men. Paul would willingly concede this, I'm sure, and his point is untouched. There is no such thing as a works-righteousness before God. Whatever then Abraham is found *κατὰ σάρκα* before men, he has not found justification on this basis before God.

4:3. The proof of this lies in Scripture where Abraham is declared to have righteousness reckoned to him on the basis of his faith. This cannot have been, therefore, an *κατὰ σάρκα* attainment.

4:4-5. The case of Abraham fully illustrates the point Paul is trying to make. What is true of the father of the nation, his physical children may well desire for themselves. The argument would be a potent one for the Jews. Clearly, Abraham's righteousness was unearned since it was by faith. It is to the one who works that boasting is appropriate (v 2). For the pay (*ὁ μισθός*) is in that case not a great gift (*κατὰ χάριν*), but an obligation (*κατὰ ὀφείλημα*).

Verse 5 does not quite give the converse of this, which would be, "to the one who does not work, the pay is by grace," but its effect is substantially that. Verse 4 is: the one who works gets what is owed him; but verse 5 says, "the one who does not work" (even the *ἄσεβῆ*) gets righteousness by faith, a route wherein there is nothing owed. The implication of this, as in 3:27, is that boasting is excluded by terms like this.

(It should be noted in passing that justification is offered to the non-worker—to the one who works not—and it may be wondered whether faith as a positive requirement is ever really understood by anyone apart from the realization that *no* works are involved. Can one truly believe without knowing that to do so is enough? To believe that faith plus works, even after salvation, are the grounds of justification is to believe a gospel different from Paul's.)

4:6. The testimony drawn from Abraham accords with that which David has rendered (notice *Καθάπερ*). Note that in this passage, the apostle has a two-fold witness from the Old Testament in accord with the Jewish law of witness. Abraham is a case derived from the law, David from

the rest of the Old Testament—loosely, the prophets. (In fact, David himself was a prophet, as Acts 2:30 expresses it.) Thus Paul can truly say that the righteousness of God is borne witness to by the law and the prophets (cp. 3:21). Moreover, Abraham represents the testimony of an Old Testament experience; David represents the testimony of an Old Testament consciousness. The former—that is, the experience—gives a specific case of this truth; the latter furnishes the evidence of the awareness of this same truth. Hence, justification by faith took place in the Old Testament and was talked about in the Old Testament. (Note, also, that two greater Jewish figures than these could hardly be found on which to base this compelling argument from Scripture.) But as in Abraham’s case, Paul had stressed the freeness of justification; in David’s case, he stresses its blessedness. But he insists also, as touching David, that it is *χωρίς ἔργων*; and, on this point, Psalm 32 bears him out. For there David speaks as a guilty sinner—that is, he is *ἀσεβῆ* (cp. 4:5)—and, hence, he speaks in a setting where merit is out of the question. So, in fact, freeness and happiness are closely linked in human experience; for whereas what we’ve earned may lead to boasting, our greatest joys are found in the kindness of others. Thus the fact that justification is by grace (as Abraham’s case shows) is the secret of its happiness (as David’s words testify).

4:7-8. A two-fold blessedness, or happiness, is actually described in the words quoted from David. First, verse 7, the first describes the blessedness of forgiveness by which sin is put out of sight. (Here I want to note that in v 7 we have a plural form of *μακάριοι*, the blessednesses of one who . . .; so, I’m thinking here of more than one happiness, and the first of these happinesses is the happiness of forgiveness.)

The first describes the blessedness of forgiveness by which sins are put out of sight, and here the verbs *ἀφέθησαν* and *ἐπεκαλύφθησαν* are involved. But the second *Μακάριος* (notice the singular) is greater; for here it is a matter of sin not being reckoned (*οὐ μὴ λογίσηται*). Thus, when David describes the blessedness of the man who has righteousness imputed without works, he does so in a stair step fashion, proceeding from the lesser to the greater blessing in such a way that he highlights that blessedness. Its greatness is seen by its association with another great blessing which, in its own way, it excels. (What I’m saying here is that he describes the blessednesses of the man; and he starts with the blessing of forgiveness, and then he stair-steps it up to something that is even a step beyond forgiveness—which is innocence, or not having sin reckoned at all. Forgiveness is remission, obviously; justification is the imputation of righteousness.)

(Here it may be observed that no man can truly feel the blessedness of justification who feels unforgiven. Thus the constantly repeated experience of forgiveness is crucial to the enjoyment of justification. The nature of Psalm 32 bears this out, especially his description of lost joy in vv 3-4. So I say here that we lose the happiness of our justification when we walk in sin and are not experiencing the forgiveness of sin; so when we have our sins forgiven on a day-by-day basis, our joy is restored.)

So the Old Testament witness, both to the reality of justification by faith in the case of Abraham and its joy in the case of David, is here presented.

4:9. But what about the blessedness that David describes? Abraham was the father of the Jewish race and David its greatest king. Did these biblical examples of justification indicate that such a happiness was reserved for the circumcised only—namely, for the Jews only—or was it also

available to the uncircumcised Gentiles? Paul's answer reverts again to the pronouncement of Scripture that Abraham's faith was accounted to him as righteousness.

4:10. But was this reckoning done to a circumcised man, or an uncircumcised man? The answer, of course, is that Abraham was circumcised only a long time after he was accounted righteous. The Genesis narrative would suggest that Abraham was at most eighty-five years old when he was justified and states specifically that he was ninety-nine when circumcised; hence, an interval of at least fourteen years separated the two events (cp. Gen. 15 and 17). Hence his faith was an uncircumcised faith, as was also that of the converted Gentiles to whom Paul preached. (We might add that the long interval between Abraham's justification and circumcision—fourteen years, or a double seven, is the Spirit's way of highlighting the distinction or disjunction between the two events, which are in essence the disjunction of faith and works. This is typological.)

4:11. The circumcision which Abraham subsequently received was, Paul is affirming, a sign (σημείον...περιτομῆς); and this involves, in my judgment, an appositional genitive. The sign of circumcision is the sign which was circumcision, and it involves a sign and a seal (σφραγιδα) of his faith righteousness. As a sign, it had pointed to the fact that he possessed such righteousness; and as a seal, it served as a verification thereof.

From the standpoint of the actual history of Abraham, it could be fairly concluded that the covenant that God had made with Abraham, for which circumcision was the designated token, would hardly have been made by God with a man whom He did not regard as righteous. A holy God would surely only enter into covenant relationship with a man whose standing before Him was assured. Hence, Genesis 15:6 is seen as an essential prelude to the Abrahamic covenant. On the level of its application to all men, it is seen that since circumcision was a work of obedience words are a sign and a seal—a pointer and a proof—that a man possesses the righteousness of faith. They are not the means by which this righteousness is obtained.

The result (notice εἰς τὸ) of this whole sequence of events as Paul is describing is that Abraham obtained a two-fold fatherhood. Thus the meaning of his name is wonderfully realized, not only on a physical level, but now also on a spiritual one. Though other men were undoubtedly justified by faith before Abraham was (cp. Heb. 11:4-7), yet none are specifically said to be so. Hence, Abraham stands on the pages of inspired Scripture as the archetype—hence, the father of all who are justified, as well as all who are circumcised.

The first of these fatherhoods is that of πατέρα...ἀκροβυστίας; hence, believing Gentiles may look to Abraham as their spiritual progenitor, as surely as Jews look to him as their physical father. Of course, implicitly, he would be a spiritual father to believing Jews, as well. God has deliberately made his justification precede his circumcision that this Gentile fatherhood might be realized and, also, of course, that Gentiles might thus have the example and the model he therefore provides.

4:12. The second fatherhood is that of circumcision, and whereas the first fatherhood (v 11) is mentioned in connection with Gentiles only, this one is mentioned in connection with both Gentiles and Jews (τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μοι, etc.); for here the physical fact of circumcision makes him the model and archetype for all those physically circumcised. But, Paul points out, not only to these; his fatherhood of the circumcised extends as well to those who fall in line (this is the way I am understanding στοιχοῦσιν) with the footprints (τοῖς ἵχνεσιν) of his faith. Here, of

course, Paul has in mind the truth that true circumcision is inward and expressed in genuine obedience (cp., for example, Rm. 2:26-29).

The footprints of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised refer to the obedient pilgrimage which his life was as an expression of his faith; and here we might point out that the nomadic life of Abraham is almost the central feature of that life. He was a man who left his own home for a new one and who, even in the new land, was a tent-dweller who had no settled abode. Both aspects of Abraham's traveling life are expressions of his faith (cp. Heb. 11:8-10). Hence, as Abraham's faith led him to follow God's pathway for him in simple obedience (and this is true circumcision), so those whose similar faith leads to a similar path of obedience are, in fact, following in the footprints of Abraham's faith and, hence, his physical circumcision which happened *after* he was justified becomes the symbol of the life of good works or obedience which Gentiles live *after* they are justified. Thus, Abraham becomes on a spiritual level, as well as on a physical one, a father of circumcision.

(It may be noted that footprints are usually in pairs. Hebrews 11:8-10 give both members of this pair. The first is Abraham's willingness to go to an unseen land to obtain it as an inheritance (Heb. 11:8), symbol of the Christian disciple who seeks heirship of the unseen kingdom of God. The second footprint is Abraham's pilgrim life in the land of promise (11:9), symbol of the Christian's willingness to be a stranger on earth, here and now, that he may truly possess it in the hereafter. But both of these footsteps are only different aspects of the same walk with God—that is, the pathway of discipleship, or in the language of Hebrews, the seeking of an eternal city (11:10). This is to say, like real footprints, they are side by side and point to the same destination.)

4:13. Abraham's faith, which he had while uncircumcised, must necessarily have been such a faith—that is, an uncircumcised faith—for (γὰρ) the great promise he believed could not possibly come through the law to him or to his seed, but only through a faith-type righteousness. The reasons for this are then spelled out in verses 14-16. Strikingly, the promise of Genesis 15:5, "so shall thy seed be" (cp. v 18) is called a promise that Abraham should be heir of the world. The promise was also τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, but apparently in not quite the same sense since only he (αὐτόν) is to be the world's heir; but the children are, in fact, part of—indeed, essential to—the promise and, hence, obviously beneficiaries of it.

A consideration of Genesis 15:5 suggests that what God promised in the "so" was more than a numerical equivalence, though that was involved. It was also latent in the promise that as the stars he was to count were the entire content of the heavens he gazed at, so his seed should be universal in scope as well. Further, comparison with Daniel 12:2-3 deepens the conception so that the heavens become a symbol before Abraham's eyes of the resurrected righteous of the kingdom of the heavens. Thus, what Abraham really saw was a visual image of the cosmos to come in which every individual, like each star, shown with the same heavenly righteousness as was now about to be imparted to him in Genesis 15:6. Thus, in that cosmos, every soul would be a spiritual child of Abraham and, thus, in this promise God held out to him the heirship of the world. In that day, Abraham can say of an entire world, these are all my children. Of course, they would be his children by faith in the sense that Romans is discussing it.

But such a promise to Abraham could not avail for a seed which could only enter in to it by the law (4:14). Indeed, if the seed could only participate in this heirship (Εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου

κληρονόμοι) by means of the law, face value would then be nullified (κεκένωται) since the law is not of faith (Gal. 3:12) and cancels its powers of appropriation; and the promise would become inoperative (κατήργηται) since any disobedience could annul it.

4:15. In fact (γὰρ), the expected effect of the law is divine wrath since man's sin guarantees its infraction, and wrath is quite the opposite effect from the blessings of a promise. Now (γὰρ, again) where no law exists, there can be no infraction (παράβασις) thereof; hence, the promise must, as a matter of principle, be given prior to the giving of the law—that is, οὐ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι νόμος, so that the danger of a transgression annulling the promise and bringing wrath instead might be obviated.

4:16. This is why (Διὰ τοῦτο), then, such a promise must be by faith. It is in order that (ἵνα) it might be a gracious promise (κατὰ χάριν) dependent on no obedience other than the faith which claimed it and, hence, threatened by no disobedience in time to come. Only in this way could the result be that the promise would be firm (βεβαίαν)—that is, assured to the entire spiritual seed which the promise envisioned. In other words, a promise conditioned by law would carry with it the uncertainty latent in any conditional stipulation. Conceivably under law, Abraham might have seed who failed to obtain their heirship as his children in the world to come. Thus, Abraham's own inheritance would be subject to the vicissitudes of the seed's behavior and the whole promise thrown into jeopardy. Indeed, from Paul's viewpoint, it would be ruined (notice, again, κατεργάζεται in v 15). But insofar as the seed has an assured place in the cosmos to come, by so much the promise to Abraham is established. The entrance of the law at any place along the line was incompatible with God's unalterable and gracious intentions. Some, of course, of Abraham's spiritual seed (the stars of heaven in Gen. 15:6) are indeed associated with the law so that we have the phrase here οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον (“not those that are of the law only”), but many of the seed are related to him only by faith (ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ). But to *both* (notice then the οὐ. . . μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ), the fact that the promise is by grace through faith is alone the reason for certainty (βεβαίαν). Not even those who are of the law can be heirs by virtue of being of the law (cp. vv 14, 16), and whether Jew or Gentiles, Abraham's entire spiritual seed must be justified by faith. The “not only” but “also” carries the same significance as the statement in verse 9. Thus, on these grounds that Jew and Gentile alike have a necessity for faith to truly become heirs of this promise, Abraham may truly be called the father of us all.

4:17. This, of course, fulfills the Scripture that he would be a father of many nations (ἔθνων, of course, can also mean Gentiles), and this standing was a standing Abraham acquired by trusting in God who resurrects and creates what does not yet exist—that is, he speaks of them as though they did exist because He can create. As father of us all, Abraham was heir of the world, but it was a future world which required the resurrection of Abraham's seed and the bringing into existence the things not yet existing. But Abraham's faith embraced these realities and, in so doing, this universal fatherhood became his. As his children, our faith also embraces the ability of God to resurrect and call into being a presently non-existing order; and the phrase τὰ μὴ ὄντα may refer basically to the seed, but against the background of Genesis 15:5, it is natural also to think of the heavenly environment within which the seed's existence will be fully realized. But we need only believe it as to ourselves. Abraham, appropriately to his fatherhood, believed it for himself and for all his seed; hence, their faith existed similarly in their father who accepted the universal heirship which they are a part of. The promise that he should be heir of the world

becomes a reality by Abraham's faith. The universal scope of which has not been, nor can be, duplicated by any of his seed. He stands, therefore, uniquely as the spiritually generative forebear of all subsequent believers—a real father of us all.

(In summarizing this discussion, I'm discussing, of course, the fact that he is heir of the world and understand this to mean that this is the world to come, and that he is heir of it in the sense that all those who will be there—whether they may be Jews or Gentiles—will, of course, be justified people, of which he will be the father, and that Abraham's faith was of a magnificent quality because in looking up at the stars of heaven [and I'm sure comprehending only dimly what was meant, but, nevertheless, realizing that he would be a spiritual father of some kind in a very broad and sweeping sense], Abraham's faith embraces God's promise for all of his seed. Whereas, when we are saved, of course, we simply believe that God saves us, Abraham is believing not only in his own personal salvation, but in the salvation of a spiritual seed; and I'm assuming that there are spiritual perceptions involved in Abraham's faith in Gen. 15, which, of course, are not spelled out there, just as only the book of Hebrews would cause us to realize that when he offered up Isaac it was in anticipation that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Inasmuch as Abraham communed with God extensively, we may be assured, I think, that Abraham had, in many ways, a broad perspective on God's spiritual purposes so that the incident in Gen. 15 is not without background. And the way that Paul is using it here, it seems to me, suggests very strongly that we are to think of it in terms of Abraham's fatherhood in the world to come—a fatherhood which necessarily is spiritual if it is to be universal. Since the promise was implicitly universal, he looks up at the heavens and he sees the entire heavens—the scope of the entire heavens and all of the stars in the heavens. This goes deeper than his simply saying he's going to have a numerous seed, but suggests a universality to his fatherhood. This is what I'm trying to discuss here in explaining the phrase “he is the heir of the world.” This is a striking phrase, but it is obviously, in Paul's view, related to his fathership of all mankind—of all saved mankind in the world to come.)

4:18. Death, the most helpless of all human conditions, was in principle the obstacle Abraham's faith had to rise above. At an age that may have been as old as eighty-five, at which time Sarah would have been about seventy-five, Abraham had seen the death of all natural potential for reproduction, both in himself and in Sarah. To hope for a physical child goes against all human expectation (παρ' ἐλπίδα). But it was hope, nevertheless (ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν), yet predicated on God and on the assurance that he would become the father of many nations, an assurance contained implicitly in what had been said to him (κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον) in the words, “so shall thy seed be.”

(It should be noted that this promise, “so shall thy seed be,” Gen. 15:5, was immediately preceded by the guarantee of physical offspring, Gen. 15:4; hence, clearly the fulfillment of Gen. 15:5 depended on Gen. 15:4 also being fulfilled. Indeed, since the Savior must come through the physical seed of Abraham, since salvation is of the Jews, the birth of Isaac was required if ever there was to be a spiritual seed, “stars of heaven.” That is to say, Abraham believed he could have physical seed contrary to all human hope, that thereby he might become the father of many nations, not merely the Jewish nation in accordance with the fullest meaning of the spoken words, “so shall thy seed be.” This, it seems to me, is the meaning of v 18.)

4:19-21. The essence, then, of Abraham's faith was its sublime refusal to focus on his or Sarah's natural condition (v 19), a consideration which could well have staggered him—that is, produced

the doubts of unbelief (οὐ διακριθῆ τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ). Instead, he was empowered by faith (ἐνεδυναμώθη τῆ πίστει) to the extent that he accorded God His own proper glory (v 20) by believing firmly (καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς) that if He had promised something, He could do it (v 21).

(Could Paul also mean by the words ἐνεδυναμώθη τῆ πίστει that there was by means of his faith a revitalization of Abraham's dead body so it could once more have the possibility of procreation? He did have a child by Hagar in Genesis 16, which, of course, was not the fulfillment of the promise, but shows a virility that Abraham now has. If so, Abraham's dead body was resurrected at the moment of his faith—that is to say, resurrected in its procreative potential—just as we also pass out of death into life the moment we believe.)

4:22-25. It was because of such a faith as Paul has just described (notice Διὸ) that the Scripture recounts Abraham's justification; but the record of this was not solely for his honor, but also for the profit of others who would exercise a like faith thereafter. This note is appropriate to Paul's whole concept of Abraham as the father of those who believe. The faith of Abraham is a model faith, an exemplar for the faith of men today. This is most transparently true in regard to the analogy of resurrection. (It is not the mere fact of imputation of righteousness that is analogous in Paul's mind, but as the whole of verse 24 makes clear, the *kind* of faith that brings imputation—that is, faith in a God of resurrection.)

As Abraham's faith was a faith in a God of resurrection, so is ours. We believe in One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Since, in fact ὅς in verse 25 may be nearly causal, His death was for our transgressions (παράπτωματα), and His resurrection essential for our justification (δικαίωσιν), it is obvious that a dead Savior cannot be the object of justifying faith. The Savior would Himself, thus, be seen under the curse of sin; but the resurrection makes His death for our offenses a demonstrably effective reality, and, thus, in His living capacity, the Lord Jesus becomes the convincing advocate in His own person for the validity of God's justifying acts. (Cp., in this connection, Rom. 8:33-34, and cp. 3:25-26 for this concept.) Whereas propitiatory, the living Christ provides a meeting place because of His death between man and God; hence, as Abraham was compelled by the very nature of his case to believe in a resurrecting God, so are we. No one surely has ever gotten saved who believed that Christ was still dead. But in other respects, the faith of Abraham resembles ours; for not only was it (1) a faith in a resurrecting God, but it was also (2) faith exercised against the reality of his own deadness. (We note, for example, that our body is dead. Cp. Rom. 7:24; 8:10-11, though the sense is a bit different in that Christian life realities are in view in these verses.) Note here that as Abraham could do nothing to alleviate his condition, no more can we. Works are out of the question where death is involved. God's power alone can reverse death. Thus, our faith, too, is against all human hope; but, in addition (3) Abraham's faith was not beset by doubts (οὐ διεκρίθη), but was full of conviction (πληροφορηθεὶς). So, too, an all-saving faith is an assurance of things hoped for.

Moreover, (4) Abraham's faith was a matter of giving God glory (δόσαν δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ)—that is, he recognized and acknowledged by it God's power to surmount the obstacles to the fulfillment of His own word. In like manner, the believer in Christ rests his all on the power of God to save and nothing on his own ability to work. In so doing, the glory of salvation is ascribed and assigned to God. Our cooperation of works would give a potential ground for boasting and, by so much, would lessen God's glory.

Finally, (5) Abraham's faith depended solely on God's word—His promise (τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, v 20), rather than on any encouragement found within himself or in his circumstances. There was none, in fact (v 19), and, in like manner, saving faith rests on God's word—that is, His promise of eternal life (cp. 1 Jn. 2:25) and not on internal or external encouragements.

CHAPTER 5

5:1-2. The basic discussion of justification has now ended. Its fruits in Christian experience must next come under review. Having established man's universal guilt under the divine wrath (1:18-3:20), and having presented God's solution to this justification has wrought peace between the believer and God. Peace, therefore, through the Lord Jesus Christ is the initial experiential legacy of our justification by faith, but is not the only such benefit. In addition (notice the καὶ), we have acquired (ἐσχήκαμεν) genuine entrance (τὴν προσαγωγήν) into the sphere of divine grace (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην)—a position not entered literally, but in the experience of faith (τῇ πίστει)—that is, the very faith (notice the article) by which we have been justified. That is where we now stand in relation to God (ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν).

In saying this, Paul continues to deal with our actual experience with God. Hostility over, we are now conscious that our standing before Him is in a place of favor (χάριν). We apprehend this fact by faith—the same faith essentially which appropriated justification. We feel like a person who has been granted admission (προσαγωγήν) into the throne room of a great monarch, or like a ship's captain when anchor is dropped in a friendly and commodious harbor, secure from wind and waves. Just as peace stresses the cessation of past hostilities, so access stresses present privilege. Before long, the apostle will greatly expand on what it means to stand before God in the sphere of grace. (Cp., for example, 6:14.) But there is also a spiritual benefit which is oriented to the future. We rejoice—in fact, we even boast (καυχώμεθα) in the sure expectation of the glory of God (ἐπ'...τοῦ Θεοῦ). That is to say, we exult to realize that our destiny is to see and experience the divine glory. The hope thus delineated is the climax of the assertions of verses 1 and 2. Peace without present privilege would be a mere barren absence of conflict, but to stand in divine grace is to have potential for present blessing.

But no present blessing can have any ultimate significance, except as it relates to our hope of glory—indeed, except as it is to be seen as part of the very glory of God which is our final destiny. Hence, as hope of this glory climaxes this initial assertion about the effects of justification, so that same hope emerges clearly toward the climax of the entire unit of thought. (For example, chapters 5-8 are the unit of thought and climax with the glory of God in 8:17-30.)

5:3-5. But to be able to exalt (καυχώμεθα) in the hope of God's glory is to gain the potential to exalt (καυχώμεθα) also in trouble itself. Superficially, this may seem like a paradox. Indeed, it may be asked why a man enjoying the standing with God described in verses 1 and 2 should have troubles (θλίψις) at all; but, in reality, to be oriented toward the experience of future glory is to gain the ability to see all our troubles in the light of it. Thus we know that the god with whom we have peace, in whose grace we stand, in whose glory we anticipate, can only mean us good by an trial He permits us to have. (Cp. Rom. 8:28-30).

This is, in fact, the case; for trouble (θλίψις) produces the capacity to endure (ὑπομονήν), while endurance, in turn, is indispensable to excellence of Christian character (δοκιμήν). And to acquire such character is to acquire a new fund of hope (ἐλπίδα). The implied verb κατεργάζεται, of which ἐλπίδα is the object, indicates that approvedness produces hope—that is to say, this hope is something more than is acquired through justification by faith (cp. v 2). It is a hope builds up as we endure trouble and develop true Christian character. It is probable that the

ἐλπὶς here referred to is chiefly, if not exclusively, eschatological. The denouement of this theme is found in Romans 8:17-30, where sufferings are endured in a hope that is explicitly future.

Thus we may think of all the awakened forms of expectation based in a future world to which troubles give rise. Paul's basic conviction is that present afflictions produce an augmented future glory (cp. 2 Cor. 5:17), but another way of viewing the matter is to say that tribulation ultimately produces hope. Of course, a man who collapses under the pressures of life is precisely that man who loses hope; hence, trouble only produces hope through the medium of the quality of Christian character (δοκιμὴν) to which endurance (ὑπομονή) gives rise. The "approved man," in other words, is a man rich in hope. The hope is inevitable for such a one (5:5), and such hope need not be a source of embarrassed consternation (οὐ κατασχύνει), however contrary to circumstances it may seem to be, or however ridiculed it may become through the unbelief of men. The reason for this is (ὅτι) found in the internal realization of God's love to which the experiences of verses 3 and 4 give rise. The man who endures trouble inevitably discovers the tender mercy of the Lord (cp. Jas. 5:11), and the man of Christian character is competent to access the loving purposes so often disclosed in our tribulation.

But any such perception comes by means of the Holy Spirit whom God has given us and is more than a mere recognition. It is, in fact, an infusion (ἐκκέχυται) which has deep impact on our hearts, moving them to the profoundest appreciation of this divine love which, because the Spirit has been given, is our portion in Christ. Here I think we meet germinally the truth of Romans 8:25-39; indeed, Romans 5:1-5 is a seed-plot from which the truths of chapters 5-8 will grow.

The Christian experience described in verses 3-5 is one in which approved Christian character (δοκιμὴν) gives rise to a hope sustained by the inner realization of the love of God (v 5). We are now to see how the love of God, beginning when we had no appreciation of it, can bring us to this point. The climax of the lengthy discussion which follows is reached in 8:35-39.

5:6. The love of God began to reach out to us when we were still (notice that Ἔτι is a key word here) quite helpless (ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν)—we were still quite helpless in our ungodly condition ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν. By implication, the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (v 5) makes this a condition no longer true of us. the power of resurrection itself has in the person of the Spirit now become ours (cp. 8:10-11). Hence, the love of God found its initial manifestation when such a condition obtained for us—that is, God loved us when we hadn't any strength at all.

5:7. This is remarkable by human standards since even a righteous man is scarcely (Μόλις) likely to find men willing to die for him, while there is only a slightly greater possibility (τάχα) that anyone might die for a good man. The contrast is between the strictly upright man to whom few are drawn to make sacrifices simply because he is that kind of a man and the man of active goodness—i.e., that is, generosity, compassion, etc.—who is somewhat more attractive to the human spirit.

5:8. But far beyond all this is God's recommendation (Συνίστησι, also, of course, equals "demonstrates"). Far beyond all this is God's recommendation or demonstration of His own love, since when we ourselves were neither righteous or good, but in fact sinners, Christ died for us. Here, too, the apostle stresses ἔτι, since now by faith we are righteous.

5:9. If, therefore, while we were *still* weak and sinful (verses 6 and 8) Christ died is the

expression of God's love for us, how much more (5:9— Πολλῷ οὖν μᾶλλον) may we expect the expression of God's love now (νῦν) that we are justified (δικαιωθέντες) by the blood He has shed. The expression of that love, such is Paul's implication, will take precisely the form that we shall be saved through Christ (δι' αὐτοῦ) from wrath (ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς). The definite article (τῆς ὀργῆς) directs us back to the previously mentioned wrath of 1:18 and following, a wrath whose explicit result is described in that chapter as handing over (παραδίδωμι) man to the dominion of his own sin. The salvation referred to in 5:9 is the first reference to salvation since 1:16. In that verse, salvation means precisely what it does here, and the rest of chapter one is really a description of what man needs to be saved *from* (notice particularly the γὰρ of 1:18); but since the salvation man needs can only come to him if he stands righteous before God—since God's ὀργη is against man's unrighteousness (1:18)—Paul was compelled first to set forth how God's righteousness was revealed in the gospel. (Notice the phrase Δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1:17—"the righteousness of God is revealed in it.") So Paul was compelled first to set forth how God's righteousness was revealed in the gospel and this he does explicitly up through chapter 4, especially in 3:21-4:25.

Only when we understand how God's righteousness can be bestowed on unrighteous men who stand under His wrath can we also understand how it is reasonable and right that men thus justified should be saved from that wrath. This is precisely what 5:9 declares. Justification, having occurred due to the love of God for us in Christ, salvation from wrath all the more should be expected to occur as the fruit of that same love.

5:10. This truth is now repeated with a new emphasis. If when we were enemies, God's love could effect a reconciliation based on Christ's death, how much more (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) should we, after being thus reconciled, expect a salvation based on Christ's life? (σωθησόμεθα is a logical future, I believe, expressing what is naturally expected, but not necessarily what is inevitable.) Here it will be seen that the new thought is explicitly that of the *life* of Christ as the basis for our deliverance from wrath with its concomitant bondage to sin. Indeed, it is the life of a risen Christ which is the δύναμις of God in the gospels and which effects this salvation. (Cp. 1:16 which speaks of the fact that there is δύναμις of God for salvation.) I take this to mean the dynamic of the life of the risen Christ to effect this salvation from wrath under which men stand if they are still in their unrighteousness. If we are to live a new life, we must have a new life to live. This, as chapter 6 will show, is nothing less than the life of Christ.

5:11. But salvation through our Savior's life will hardly be a cold and unemotional experience. If such a reality is realizable, and it is, we may expect in addition (Οὐ μόνον δέ) a concurrent experience of exultation (καυχώμενοι). The participle suggests manner—that is, we shall be saved exulting in God's Christ. This exultation is both that of our sure anticipation of eternal life (cp. 5:2, καυχώμεθα...τοῦ Θεοῦ) and that of our triumph over tribulations based on our believing knowledge that their ultimate outcome will be for our good (καυχώμεθα...εἰδότες, v 3).

So, I'm saying here that the boasting or rejoicing in God alludes back to the kinds of things that we rejoice in in verses 2 and 3. The exultation is specifically in God, but mediated (διὰ)—that is, made possible—through our Lord Jesus Christ who is the mediant (δι' οὗ) again, of the reconciliation which we now enjoy and which is the essential foundation for the full range of boasting (καυχώμενος) which Paul envisions here. On that reconciliation alone can salvation

from wrath be built (cp. v 10), and only such salvation unlocks the full possibilities for this exultant victorious life.

5:12. Διὰ τοῦτο links what follows back to what the apostle has just said. In view of the reality of salvation from wrath, made possible by Christ, one may speak of the analogy inverse in character between Him and the first man. The comparison begun here by ὡςπερ is not completed really until we reach verse 18. Verses 13-17, as in the KJV, are a parenthetical digression, which, however, fills the final comparison with meaning. Sin, Paul affirms, made its entrance into the world through Adam and brought death with it. As a result, death has become a universal experience because sin is a universal experience. The phrase ἐφ' ὃ πάντες ἥμαρτον ought to be compared with 3:23 whose idea it repeats. Sin, thus, may be conceptualized as a disease, contracted by the first man's disobedience and hereditary in nature so that it appears in all his offspring who, like him, suffer its ultimate penalty—death.

(The story of the forbidden fruit of Eden is rational in the extreme since all men are transparently afflicted by physical deterioration, euphemistically called “aging,” which must have originated by some physical means in the first ancestor of the race, or, more properly, the disease ought to be called sin because this is both the source in each man and the means by which the deterioration process is aggravated and accelerated. The development of modern medical insight into the close bond between psychic and physical disturbances is but confirmation of the spiritual base underlying man's rapid descent into physical death.)

5:13. But the assertion that all have sinned needs some amplification in view of the absence of known divine commandments during the period between Adam and Moses. Paul's procedure is to assert that sin was indeed a reality during that period, but that no account is kept of it. The meaning of the words ἁμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται μὴ ὄντος νόμου is not easy. It can hardly mean that God does not hold men responsible for sin in the absence of law, since they will still be judged (cp. 2:11-16). Still less can it mean that He has no record of what they have done (cp. the “books” of Revelation 20). Since, however, Paul is speaking in this context of biblical history, it seems plausible that he has the biblical record in mind. Of Adam, we are told the specific nature of his transgression and, thus, his sin is ἐλλογεῖται—that is, charged to his account in the biblical record. In the record of succeeding generations (cp. Gen. 5), we are not told in what way they sinned, but simply that they died. Thus, in their case, sin is not imputed—that is, it does not become a part of the biblical record. (We notice here the use of this special word ἐλλογεῖται, rather than λογίζομαι.)

(Of course, we have the story of the murder of Abel by Cain, but in the structure of Genesis, this seems to belong to the section on Adam. Paul appears to be speaking in general terms of mankind as a whole without taking the cases of specific individuals into mind. After the flood, there was a law given to Noah against murder. This also is not in view here, though the later stories of Genesis make clear men are guilty when innocent blood is shed. The point is that we know from the biblical records what the universal experience of man was with regard to death. We notice, therefore, the repeated “and he died” of Genesis 5, but we know nothing specific about their sins. Even Genesis 6:5-12 is very general.) Ἐλλογεῖται appears to have a commercial background and means charged to someone's account. It probably implies the merchant's record of what the customer had purchased and, therefore, owed. Paul is thus saying that the Scriptures do not keep accounts of the sins of mankind before the giving of the law. Individual cases are no

real exception to this general truth, and this only really begins when the law is enacted, since from then on the sins of Israel, which is a microcosm of mankind, are a matter of specific and detailed record. They serve, in fact, to condemn all mankind (cp. 3:19), and, indeed, in his quotation of the Old Testament in 3:10-18, we have just such a detailed listing. In other words, we have an imputation of the type of sin that is conspicuous by its absence in the period before the law—the listing applying to all men in the quotation in 3:10-18. So on this understanding of οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται, we might translate μὴ ὄντος νόμου as “since there was no law.” The reference is explicitly to the period in view, the present tense of ἐλλογεῖται setting forth the present reality in terms of the Scripture testimony, much as we might say it isn’t recorded in his book since he wasn’t there at the time.

5:14. But if the Scriptures do not charge sin in detail to man’s account, they nevertheless make plain that he was subject to death, a proof, therefore, of sin’s presence. Men had not sinned in the same manner (ἐπὶ τὸ ὁμοίωματι) as Adam—his sin being a transgression (τῆς παραβάσεως) of a known injunction from God, while theirs was not. Yet sin was nonetheless real, for wrong is wrong in the universe, whether men are aware of it or not. It is not wrong solely because it is forbidden, but because it is inimical to man’s well-being, as indeed the eating of the fruit proved to be. Paul is here implicitly arguing from the biblical testimony about universal death. Though the detailed nature of man’s sin is not known from that record, the fact of it is clear since death was in control even of those who had not, like Adam, transgressed a law of God clearly revealed. If men had done no wrong, they would not have suffered its consequence in death. But die they did, and, hence, all had sinned.

The appended phrase, ὃς ἐστὶν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, is, in the Pauline manner, a springboard to the next idea; and becoming the original source of sin and death even to those who did not sin so flagrantly as he, Adam becomes a type of Christ who, likewise, becomes the head of a race—though He, too, is unique in His experience as was Adam in reference to the pre-Mosaic sinners who followed him. In speaking of death reigning (ἐβασίλευσεν), the apostle means more than merely that it occurred. Death was king in that sin gave it full control over man’s destiny. Every act of man brought men closer to the experience of death which thus exerted a controlling power over men, like that of a magnet over metal. Men were incapable of breaking the dominion of sin, and, hence, their sinful lives were lived as the subjects of death—serving only the ultimate end of death. Now, however, Paul will begin to describe how the coming One can break that cycle by the power of His life.

5:15. The effects, however, of the work of Christ are quite different than of the work of Adam. The words οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα οὕτω καὶ τὰ χάρισμα suggest especially in view of καὶ a similarity that is essentially contrasted. The offense and the gift are alike but quite different. The comparison here introduced is carried out in this and the following verses. Adam’s offense brought universal death. (Οἱ πολλοί here is a reference to all mankind.) God’s grace, on the other hand, and the gift which expresses it (the grace being that of one man, Jesus Christ), has abounded in the sphere of those who are its recipients. Τοὺς πολλοὺς this time refers to all believers. (To be noted is the contrast between ἀπέθανον and ἐπερίσσευσεν, with its implication that somehow God’s grace and gift exceeded or surpassed death itself, in addition to the fact that ἐπερίσσευσεν suggests abundance also.) Paul is not here explicit, but in the background of his thought is that fact that God’s grace makes possible a resurrection kind of life (cp. 6:4, 9-11,

etc.). He is, of course, leading up to this. Adam's sin, therefore, brought death, but God's gift produces something which abounds over death—namely, eternal life (cp. 6:23).

5:16. But once again, what comes through one that sinned is distinct from what comes from the divine gift (οὐχ ὅς, and we could perhaps supply [γέγονεν] δι' ἑνὸς ἁμαρτησαντος τὸ δῶρημα). The sin of the former issued in condemnation (κατάκριμα), while the latter issues in righteous behavior (δικαίωμα). The word κατάκριμα occurs only here and in verse 18 and 8:1 in the entire New Testament. It refers not to the sentencing process, but to the actual penalty itself. Deismann suggested the rendering “penal servitude” (cp. Moulton & Milligan and Doutor's lexicon). The word may be readily taken as an allusion to the condition of man described in Romans 1. God's judgment (κρίμα) we are told here found its starting point in the sin of Adam (ἐξ ἑνὸς [supply παραπτώματος], cp. the last half of the verse), and it led on to (εἰς) the penal servitude to sin and death under which men now labor (cp. Rom. 8:2).

Note Paul's characteristic construction meaning “from-to” (ἐξ—εἰς)—that is to say, the ultimate outcome of that one original tragic trespass has been the dreadful enslavement of mankind to sin and death as a result of God's righteous judgment and wrath against them. On the contrary, the grace/gift (τὸ χάρισμα) starts with (ἐκ) the many transgressions of those who received it and leads forward to (εἰς) the righteousness God seeks in man.

Δικαίωμα may be taken here in its frequent sense of a right act, just as we must take it also at 2:26 in the plural and 8:4, truly also at v 18. 1:32, the only other use in Romans, has the other common meaning of “statute.” The usual interpretation of δικαίωμα here as being equal to justification is not called for and has no New Testament parallel. (Cp. TDNT, pp. 221-22, for a normative treatment of the whole matter.) Hence, the contrast is between the penal servitude (κατάκριμα) under which sinners find themselves and the correct behavior (δικαίωμα) made possible by God's free gift. The former found its starting point in only one trespass, the latter in many. Hence, Paul is saying that God's grace can begin with sinners full of sin and bring them to the experience of righteous living. As verse 17 shows, the gift is the gift of righteousness, so that Paul has in mind that sinners are justified from their many offenses; and from there led on to a keeping of righteousness (δικαίωμα) of the law (cp. 8:4). This, of course, is the salvation of 1:16 and 5:9-10, and is another way of stating that the justified live righteously as a result of God's gift to them.

5:17. Paul now makes a deduction (notice the γὰρ) from the previous statement which serves to amplify its meaning. If, in fact, death has ruled (ἐβασίλευσεν) in the lives and experiences of men (and this is precisely the κατάκριμα under which they live), it is reasonable—in fact, more than reasonable (πολλῷ μᾶλλον)—that those to whom God's gift of grace has come should have a triumphant—that is, a reigning—life (ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσι), as a result of this gift. This is precisely the right (δικαίωμα) behavior, which the gift makes possible. Death, of course, has ruled men by means of the power of sin in their lives; thus, the whole character of their lives is death-oriented and death-directed, but this need not be the case with those to whom the free gift has come. This abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness makes victory over sin the proper and expected outcome, and, hence, death-orientation is the very converse of the believer's experience. Βασιλεύσουσι is again a logical future; in fact, as the words ἐν ζωῇ suggest, his experience is life-oriented and, as the subsequent development of Paul's argument makes clear, this is nothing less than the experience of eternal life—the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself.

We are saved by His life (5:10). Romans 6:23 completely dovetails with the truth of this verse: Death is the ultimate end toward which men who live in sin are irresistibly drawn; thus death rules them. But eternal life is an experience made possible by God's gift; hence, the believer may reign in this kind of life as it is realized in his experience.

(It may be noted that τὴν περισσείαν is an allusion to ἐπερίσσευσεν in verse 15 and continues to carry the connotation implicit there of a life triumphant over death—that is to say, the excess of God's grace and His gift of righteousness is nothing less than the life which that grace and gift impart and which surmounts or exceeds the experience of death to which men have fallen prey. Hence, this abundance—this resurrection life—makes possible the kingly experience [βασιλεύσουσι] of the believer whereby he conquers death and sin, rather than is conquered by them. The life he lives being eternal, death has no power [cp. ἐβασίλευσει] over it at all.)

(The genitives [connected with] τὴν περισσείαν come close to being exegetical and equal, therefore, to the abundance *which* is the grace and the gift of righteousness, while τῆς χάριτος and τῆς δωρεᾶς are virtually equal to the gracious gift, or equal to τὸ χάρισμα [cp. v 16.]

(Since man's κατάκριμα is due to his unrighteousness, he cannot, of course, ever escape it until he becomes righteous. This is God's gift to him. The gospel is God's power to salvation from wrath because it reveals this freely-given righteousness. But the abundance of this gift is a reference to the life it imparts so that life and righteousness are at one and the same time the bestowal of God's gift. The two ideas are combined in verse 18 in the phrase δικαίωσιν ζωῆς.)

5:18. The words ἄρα οὖν serve to mark the statement of this verse as having a summarizing character. The series of contrasts between the transgression and the free gift is now climaxed by Paul in a way that focuses upon the point he has been building toward. (The crucial phrase is δικαίωσιν ζωῆς.) He has just pointed out that those who receive the gift of righteousness will reign ἐν ζωῇ (v 17). These two thoughts are now combined in δικαίωσιν ζωῆς. If the reception of righteousness implies the ability to live (v 17), justification must be a like kind of justification—in other words, the free gift must involve life as well as righteousness. This has already been implied in ἐπερίσσευσεν (v 15) and τὴν περισσείαν (v 17), as well as δίκαιωμα (v 16), which suggests the possibility of acting righteously.

Thus, Paul says here that just as man's penal servitude (κατάκριμα) has issued from one transgression, so from one righteous act (δι' ἑνὸς δικαιώματος—in both parts of the verse, ἑνός is an adjective, contrary to AV), has issued the justification of life—the life implying the capacity to escape the κατάκριμα. Since man is ruled by death (cp. v 17), he must find life to escape that route. Righteousness imparted without life would have been helpless to escape the katakrima. Hence, his justification must be δικαίωσιν ζωῆς.

Δικαίωσιν occurs only here and in 4:25 in the whole New Testament. There Christ is said to have been raised διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν (“because of our justification”). Perhaps this should be understood somewhat in the sense that He arose because our justification had been secured. Since this is ascribed to his blood in 5:9, our offenses resulted in His death; the payment in His blood for those offenses resulted in His resurrection. this thought dovetails nicely with that which we have here. In the case of Christ, life sprang out of the accomplishment of our justification. In our case, it springs out of our experience of this—hence, it is a δικαίωσιν ζωῆς.

(Note that the εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους means merely “unto”; and in the first clause of the verse, refers to what is actually the experience of all men, but in the last clause to what is potentially so. The subjects of the two statements are not expressed, but the AV had hardly be far wrong.

5:19. An advance is now made on his previous thoughts by Paul, though continuing the format of contrast between Adam’s act and that of Christ. The advance is suggested by the verb κατέστησαν, which implies that the subjects of the action are actually constituted this or that. We move then a step beyond simply the imputation of righteousness to the thought of the impartation of righteousness. The connection, of course, is with δικαίωσιν ζωῆς and its implication of a vital essence in justification. The justified one has life and, hence, possesses an imparted as well as imputed righteousness, since the life he has is an essentially righteous life (cp. Gal. 2:20; notice 1 Jn. 3:9). All of this continues to epitomize (cp. Ἄρα οὖν of v 18) the thought to which Paul had ascended in verse 17. Those who receive the gift of righteousness reign in life, and this is so he says now, because justification of life has constituted them righteous. As surely as Adam’s disobedience resulted in a race sinful by nature, so the Savior’s obedience results in one that is righteous by nature. The future κατασταθήσονται views the long-range outcome of this obedience, the οἱ πολλοὶ embracing all those who shall ultimately partake of its benefits.

It is clear from this that as sinful acts actually issue from the lives of many who are constituted sinners, so righteous acts are to issue from those constituted righteous. Indeed, καθίστημι does not draw the line clearly between nature and acts. In either case—that is, in *both* cases—this is what the many actually are. Paul will subsequently argue the naturalness of holy living to those who are alive with a holy life. One notes here the appearance of the words παρακοῆς and ὑπακοῆς for the first time in this passage. They are appropriate because Paul is thinking in terms of actual obedience in the lives of believers. The παρακοῆς of Adam is the prototypical conduct of all ἁμαρτωλοί, while the ὑπακοῆς of Christ is the prototypical conduct of all δικαιοῖ. In the same way, the δικαίωμα of verse 16 in reference to believers’ conduct has an archetype in the one (δικαιώματος)—Christ (v 18). Here, I’m saying that the righteous act, or the righteous living, which is expected of Christians (using the word δικαίωμα in v 16) finds its archetype in the righteous act of Christ, in His obedience at the cross (v 18).

Both δικαιώματος (v 18) and ὑπακοῆς (v 19) refer to our Lord’s work at the cross. The supreme righteous act and obedience in human history, as also Adam’s παραπτώματος and παρακοῆς, are the most fatally significant act of their kind in history. Thus the head of the old race is copied by his descendants in terms of the primal act that constituted them what they are, while those who belong to the new race find in the cross not only the act of their Head—which constitutes them what they are—but an act whose righteousness and obedience to the divine will calls for emulation. This latter relationship is, of course, implicitly here, but easily deduced. The cross will later be seen as well as an event with which we can identify, so that in Christ’s act of obedience we find an end to our old life of disobedience. We are dead to sin, and the starting point from which issues our new life of obedience—we are alive to God. The words, ὑπακοή, ὑπακούω, are prominent in chapter 6, verses 12, 16, and 17. Thus, the obedience-disobedience motif, which is here introduced, is not merely a passing allusion, but a part of the advance of Paul’s thought. The obedience of Christ at the cross lies at the basis of our obedience.

We may say that the obedience of Christ at the cross lies at the basis of our obedience in three ways. One, it gives God a righteous basis for constituting us righteous people. Secondly, we

copy the Savior's obedience; but, thirdly, we are joined by the Spirit to that obedient act so that we emerge from His death to live obediently (6:4).

(We say it is conceivable that the future κατασταθήσονται is a logical future like those in 5:9, 10 and then refers to the actual outliving of righteousness by virtue of the gift of δικαίωσιν ζωῆς. Many shall actually behave righteously is the thought, but this is doubtful because δικαιοι more naturally describes all the justified. (Cp. 1:17 where the phrase Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται is, in reality, a thematic phrase—the ὁ δίκαιος being identified in chapters 2 and 4, and his life by faith being described in chapters 6-8. Chapter 5 is the transition between these two basic ideas—that is, that he is righteous and that he is to live righteously.)

5:20. But between the crucial disobedience of one, by which many were made sinners (v 19a), and the crucial obedience—the cross of Christ—by which many are made righteous (19b), there slipped in (παρεισῆλθε) the Mosaic law, which served as a preparation for the grace which that obedience made available. The law magnified man's trespass. The article τὸ with παράπτωμα is generic, and the phrase equals men's offenses. Ἐπλεόνασεν does not need to refer to a quantitative increase in men's sin, but can express a qualitative increase. What was inherently wrong before the law becomes formally and explicitly so once the law is given. Thus when man violates the divine standards, the enormity of his trespass is even greater. Thus the offense abounds in the sense that it is far more serious and manifestly wicked than before; it becomes a direct affront to the revealed will of God. Yet precisely as sin has abounded, grace stretches beyond it (ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν)—that is, God's grace is more than more abundant (note the intensive ὑπέρ). It is more than more abundant than man's guilt there—hence, the law's function as a divine magnifying glass that exposed sin's enormity in its full light. But this function served to furnish an appropriate backdrop for the revelation of God's grace; for only if man's sin could be seen for what it was could God's grace be seen for what it was.

5:21. Moreover, the exact nature of this superabounding of God's grace is such that it leads to the dethroning of sin in the lives of those who receive it. The ἵνα wavers between purpose and result in its relationship to ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν. "It overabounded to this end," we might paraphrase it. Sin has exercised its reign (ἐβασίλευσεν) in connection with death (ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ)—that is to say, in a sphere where death reigned (v 17), sin reigned in that same reign. In a sense, then, sin and death are the co-regents of man's experience apart from God. Only in this place, Paul stresses the rule of sin, because he wishes to juxtapose the grace which overcomes that sin—whereas in verse 17, death and life are juxtaposed. But this sin in death rule can be overthrown by the reign of God's superabounding grace. Such a reign will not be that of a tyrant, as in the case with sin, but the reign rather of divine benevolence, compassion, and life. It is not, as will be seen, the rigid rule even of law; but the very nature of the expression ἡ χάρις βασιλεύση suggests that it is with the chords of divine goodness that the life is to be bound and its direction altered. This is possible through the bestowal of divine righteousness (διὰ δικαιοσύνης) which God's grace has made available to us—that is, justification. And its experiential result is eternal life (εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, 6:22). The result is natural since the bestowed righteousness is a justification of life (cp. v 18), so that if justification brings life, the reign of grace can bring the vital experience of that life. All this, of course, not abstractly effected, but realized, rather, through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν).

CHAPTER 6

6:1. In the light of this superb possibility of grace reigning unto eternal life (notice the οὖν), shall we propose (οὖν ἐροῦμεν) to go on living in sin on the premise (Paul must have heard it actually suggested, cp. 3:4-8) that this will lead to the further magnification of God's grace? Note that πλεονάζω is used here of grace and not ὑπερπερισεύω, as in 5:20. It is the same word used there for the effect of the law on sin and refers to the *qualitative* magnifying either of sin or of grace. Ὑπερπερισεύω more *quantitative*—that is, grace is more than; it exceeds man's sin. The specious argument is obviously built on the suggestion that, granted the truth of the assertion of 5:20b, one can expect God's grace to be as great as we make it necessary for it to be; and if we make more room for that grace by multiplying our sin, God will be glorified, since His grace will be magnified.

6:2. This proposal deserves categorical rejection (μὴ γένοιτο). Moreover, it overlooks a moral impossibility (οἴτινες...ἀμαρτία...αὐτῇ). The key word here is ζήσομεν. It is, indeed, possible to continue (ἐπιμένωμεν) in sin, but the Christian cannot *live* there; and while both Scripture and experience alike testify to our capacity to *persist* in sin, to *persist* in a thing is not necessarily the same as living there. Here, then, ζήσομεν should be understood existentially. Sin is not an authentic Christian experience because we are, in fact, dead to it. Persistence in sin is most normally accompanied in believers by a sense of guilt or tension or frustration (cp. Ps. 32), for the simple reason that it is no longer natural to his true inner nature. He is, therefore, like a creature out of his natural environment—incapable of being truly at home in sin. Thus, he cannot truly live there.

6:3. The reason for this is now more fully spelled out. It is, in fact, our baptism by the Spirit into the death of Christ, which is the reason for our being unable to *live* in sin. As though speaking to a supposed objector (v 1 was doubtless an idea actually articulated), Paul asks whether his readers are aware that their baptism in Jesus Christ—not water baptism, which would be in His name (this is a personal union)—means also a baptism into His death.

6:4. Since, then, we have been united with Christ in death and in burial, our true life is the new one we are now called upon to live. The phrase συνετάφημεν...εἰς τὸν θάνατον is much like saying entombed in death; and since burial is the definitive act which signifies the removal of a person from life, the expression suggests the finality of our union with Christ's death. It is not, of course, that our union with Him in this begins only at the grave (v 6 refers to crucifixion), but rather it is that we go down into the grave with Him, dying as surely and finally as He died. But as His death has become ours, so also, like Him, we are to lead a new life. As far as the statement of the verse goes, the thought is not explicitly of identity of life, but analogy. The οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς implies that as resurrection (ἠγέρθη χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν) began for Him a new life, so we, too, can live such a life. Implicit along with this is the implication that the methodology of the resurrection of Christ will be the methodology of our walk. The glory of the Father raised Him and, it is hinted by this, will enable us to walk in our new experience. How this is so will become clearer in chapter 8.

6:5. Paul continues to draw out the implications of the crucial affirmation of verse 4. If we have become innate with Him in the experience of death (σύμφυτοι, “grown together”), it follows that the same must be true in reference to His resurrection. Here the thought moves a bit beyond the

analogy of verse 4 and more explicitly affirms likeness. The ὁμοιώματι mentioned here must be ὁμοιώματι of life as well as of death, Paul argues. Note the shift in verb from γεγόναμεν to ἐσόμεθα. The former looks at an event, something we have become as a result of that event—union in death—but the latter looks at a future condition in which Paul thinks of the life we will be living, wherein we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. In other words, the contrast is still that of verse 4—between the baptism by which we have become something and the walk in which we will be something. The reference, then, is not to our ultimate resurrection, but to our present likeness to Christ as we live a resurrection life. The future is once again (as from 5:9 on in this section it usually is) a logical future describing what is the expected and predictable outcome of the given experience.

6:6. Τοῦτο γινώσκοντες may be rendered, “since we know this,” and suggest an argument for the assertion that we shall live a life like Christ’s own in resurrection.

(Paul met the risen Christ and thinks of likeness to Him in terms of likeness to a risen person. John thinks in terms of likeness to His earthly walk, cp. 1 Jn. 2:6. The two things are substantially the same in actual experience; for Jesus Christ is basically the same yesterday, and today, and forever.)

The logic of verse 5 is valid since we know that the death mentioned there involves the crucifixion of our old man with the intent of freeing us from slavery to sin. Obviously a conditional idea would also fit in γινώσκοντες, in which case the fulfillment of the reality of verse 5 depends on our knowing the truth of verse 6; but causal is probably better in view of verse 9. The old man seems best defined as the intrinsic inner self which lived prior to our conversion (cp. Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:21-24 in the Greek). Being basically corrupt (Eph. 4:22), he was in hopeless bondage to the body of sin. The body of sin, in view of Colossians 2:11, taken with 3:5, refers to the aggregate mass of our sins, each of which is a member. The term “body” is appropriate because, though it is a metaphor, the fact remains that the seat of the sin principle is in our physical body and in its members (cp. 7:23-24). The great problem of Christian experience is to free our physical members from being instruments for expressing the members (i.e., particular sins) of the body of sin. (Note, especially, 6:12-13).

Of course, for each person, the body of sin has an individualized character, just as does his physical body. The death of our old man, enslaved as it was to sin, opens the way for rendering inoperative (καταργηθῆ) the body of sin and, thus, nullifying our slave service (δουλεύειν) to sin. As Colossians 3:5 suggests, each member is individually mortified; thus, we dismember the body of sin. Hence, likeness to Christ in His resurrection life (v 5) becomes a real possibility.

6:7. The fact is, our death has freed us from every claim of sin upon our lives, as death is the end of any master’s claim on the service of a slave. The word δεδικαίωται obviously recalls justification truth and seems to be a virtual word play. We are, indeed, justified from sin in that no charge can be laid against us, but here the main thought is that sin has no legitimate claim on our lives. Both things, of course, are true and become true, at one and the same time. In fact, as death ends the claims of the law upon any law-breaker, being the ultimate penalty, it ends, as well, the claim of a master upon his slave. In this way, our death with Christ can be seen to be at once the basis for our justification and for our liberation, as well.

6:8. The apostle now reiterates the truth he has been developing, but with the addition of a new thought. The verb πιστευομεν is crucial here, for it introduces the concept of faith into the arena of the death-life presentation Paul is making. The pivotal truth of Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (1:17) is involved here, for the first step towards living for Christ here and now is to *believe* that we can do so. Our reasoning begins with our death with Him from which faith projects a life with Him. Peter walking on the water illustrates this truth; each step required faith that such steps were possible.

6:9-10. Such a projection is a valid conclusion of faith, indeed, when we consider what we know of our Savior's own experience. (Εἰδότες is probably causal and equal to "since we know," signifying reflected knowledge.) Death is for our Lord a finished experience. Death has no further claim (οὐκέτι κυριεύει) upon Him (v 9). Hence, His death to sin was a once-for-all (ἐφάπαξ) matter, and the risen life (cp. ἐγερθεῖς in v 9) He now lives is lived entirely to God (v 10). It follows from this that, if we have been joined to His once-for-all death to sin, we can believe that we, too, can live with Him to God. Hence, verses 9-10 give the grounds for the faith expressed in verse 8. Verse 11 gives us the precise content of that faith.

6:11. Taking our Lord's experience as the paradigm of our own, we are to consider (λογίζεσθε is the practical equivalent of πιστευομεν in v 8) our death with Him to be like His—a death to sin—and our life with Him to be like His—a life to God.

(Verse 8 [συζησομεν] and verse 11 [ζῶντας] may differ slightly in emphasis, the former pointing to the actual linear experience of life, while the latter looks at the fact of its intrinsic possession.)

The starting point of all reformation of conduct is the reformation of the self-image. We love our neighbor only if and as we love ourselves, for example. Self-hate, in any form, undermines responsible conduct. God, therefore, begins with us by teaching us to reckon by faith that we are indeed new people imbued with a new life which has Him, not sin, as its focus. This reality is true by the baptism of the Spirit, whether we believe it or not; but believing it is an essential step to experiencing it. Thus verses 12-13 follow with the actual conduct which follows such a self-perception.

6:12-13. The οὖν gives the logical connection. If we are truly dead to sin and alive to God, it follows that sin has no right to reign over our mortal body, nor do we need to be obedient to sin's corrupt desires. The phrase ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι is important because Paul is thinking of a resurrection miracle whereby θνητῶ bodies are the vehicles for an undying eternal life. (Note this theme again at 8:10-11.) The phrase μηδὲ παριστάνετε carries forward the thought at two levels, whereas βασιλευέτω looks more at the dominating power of sin. (Notice ὑπακούειν in v 12.) Παριστάνετε suggests the volitional element which is also involved on our side. In addition, verse 12 looks primarily at the whole body, while verse 13 looks at its individual parts (τὰ μέλη). (Cp. 1 John 2:15 for a similar whole-parts correlation with μηδέ.)

Sin is not to dominate the body as a fact of our total experience, nor are we to allow it the use of any of its parts so that these parts become the implements (ὄπλα) for unrighteousness. Rather (and here again the whole-parts conception appears), we are to present our total persons (ἑαυτοῦς) to God (cp. Rom. 12:1) in our capacity as one risen from the dead, and we are to present the parts of our body as implements of righteousness to God. (Here the verb παραστήμι

is implied, but not necessarily the aorist παραστήσατε.) What is involved in both parts of verse 13 is not so much a decision to do something, but the actual doing itself with volition implied. Hence, we present our members as instruments of unrighteousness when we actually do unrighteousness, and our members as instruments of righteousness when we actually do righteousness. This is clear from verse 16. (In the latter case, however, the doing is preceded by a self-consciousness before God—that is, the reckoning in verse 11.) We actually offer ourselves (παρίστημι has sacrificial overtones and, again, cp. 12:1) to God, and this presentation is realized by the actual doing of righteous deeds. Hence, the truth is that the self-consciousness and the action are concurrent—the former being the faith itself and the latter the works of faith, that is, the justified one is then actually living by faith (again, picking up the theme of 1:17, the just, the righteous man, shall *live* by faith).

6:14. What Paul has just enjoined (v 13b) is possible because (γάρ) there is now no reason for sin to dominate us, and this, in turn, is true because (γάρ) we are not under law, but under grace. This latter thought is new and will be more fully developed in its implications in chapter 7, but just the mere statement itself implies somehow sin is the strength of the law (cp. 1 Cor. 15:56) and that not being under the law's aegis is a secret of victorious living. In fact, Paul is here taking up one of the effects of our being dead with Christ and risen with Him—namely, that we are delivered thereby from the law (cp. chapter 7). Hence, though a new thought, it is in train with what the apostle has been discussing.

6:15. But before discussing this theme more fully, Paul wishes to ward off a, no doubt, frequent distortion of it. Freedom from the law does not imply freedom to sin—far from it. This is similar to his concern about the same kind of distortion at 6:1. However, the question is the triumph of grace over sin, a triumph not to be deliberately sought by multiplying sin. Here the question is the supersession of law by grace.

6:16. Paul's answer takes the form of denying the existence of the total freedom to sin. The antinomian spirit always supposes that the removal of legal stipulations is tantamount to removing all inhibitions to sin. This is not the case, for, as already shown in connection with the pre-law era (cp. 5:13-14), sin brings consequences—that is, it brings death, even in the absence of law. There is, therefore, no true freedom to sin, but, in fact, a bondage to its consequence of death. In fact, moral actions always make men the servants of those actions, in that those who do them are subject to the consequence which follow from them. Hence, Paul affirms that when we do sin's bidding, we are subject to its consequence of death. (Εἰς θάνατον would be equal to leading to death.) While when we do what obedience to God bids us to do, we become subject to obedience's consequence of righteousness—that is, obedience issues in righteousness and, hence, to be δοῦλοι of obedience is to be unable to escape righteousness.

6:17-18. The thought of bondage to obedience equalling bondage to righteousness is a novel one which the apostle develops a bit. How it has become a basic reality of our experience is now stated. Paul is thankful that his Christian readers have entered such a bondage by means of their initial act of obedience to the gospel. Christianity begins with an act of obedience—the obedience of faith—and this act determines the basic nature of the one who thus obeys. That is, when we are born again, an act of obedience—our faith, because faith is commanded—effects this and obedience thus becomes the innate tendency of the regenerate person. (Cp. the innate word in James 1.) Indeed, to obey the gospel by believing it is to find freedom from sin in our inmost

nature and servitude to that same inner nature to righteousness. Hence, Paul will say in the following verses it becomes natural to obey righteousness since inwardly we are its servants. Conversely, it makes no sense to obey sin since inwardly we are free from it. Thus, the remarkable thought of bondage to righteousness, in the last analysis, has its roots in what we are—that is, what we are by new birth. This is relevant to the law-grace conception since our bondage to righteousness stems, not from external standards imposed from without as by law, but from an inner compulsion springing from an act of the heart (ὕπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας, notice, an act of the heart which has determined the *bent* of our inner man). In fact, it may be suggested that grace is the *τόπον διδασχῆς* which we have obeyed in believing and, hence, grace—not law—becomes the determining principle of our life. As our initial obedience was a response to grace, so is all subsequent obedience.

(I suggest that it may also be suggested that the *τόπον διδασχῆς* relates to the truth about Christ's death and resurrection life. A positive response initially to this truth leads to an instinctive desire to live as He now lives. He personally becomes the type to which all subsequent obedience is directed. Note that Peter in Matthew 14:28, immediately upon recognizing the Lord, has an instinctive desire to do as He was doing. His walking on water symbolizes the life of faith, his desire the instinctive regenerate desire.)

6:19. The thought of bondage to righteousness is merely a human (ἄνθρωπινόν) manner of speaking necessitated by (διὰ) that fleshly weakness that seems so often to incline us to sin (cp. 8:3), a weakness aggravated by the law. Paul's readers must be reassured by the strongest possible language that, however great that weakness might seem to be in their life, their inner bond to righteousness was firm indeed—hence, the image of slavery to righteousness. It is reassuring, indeed, to know that however often we fail through weakness of the flesh, we cannot escape a basic deep compulsion to righteousness. Hence, what follows in this verse is an admonition which makes sense in the light of our inward tie to righteousness. The flesh may be weak, but the fleshly members of the body need not, as formerly, be turned over as slaves for the doing of uncleanness and iniquity, with the resulting production of iniquity (εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν). Now these very members can and should be turned over as slaves to righteousness with the resulting production of holiness.

6:20. It is true, of course, that at one time we were slaves of sin on an inward level and, hence, free from righteousness. That is, it had no compulsive power in our innermost being.

6:21. But when that was so, our fruit could hardly be called fruit (τίνα οὖν καρπὸν εἶχετε τότε) where it was of such a quality that we are now ashamed of it. The verse might suggest that the unsaved state is fruitless, but perhaps does not quite do so in view of 7:5. The end result of such an experience can only be death.

6:22. But now (νῦν is forceful) that the basic inward bond described in verse 20 has been reversed and our inner man is by nature free from sin and in bondage to God, a new kind of fruit is possible. This fruit is productive of holiness (εἰς ἁγιασμόν)—that is, it is holy fruit. It has its end result in eternal life. Verses 20-22 recapitulate the basic truth asserted in verses 17-18—namely, that a drastic inward change has been wrought by our obedience to the gospel. They also carry forward the ideas of verses 16 and 19b where the external submission to sin is rejected as an acceptable option and external submission to righteousness enjoined by adding the idea of fruit—that is to say that our inward change produces a corresponding change of fruit, fruit always

being the expression of the inner nature of the tree. We might theoretically persist in sin (cp. v 15), but whereas sin was once the shameful fruitage of what we were, righteousness and holiness are now the true expression—the true fruit of what we are.

Ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν states the principle, rather than the fact about Paul's readers. As we might say, a peach tree has its fruit in peaches, hence Paul's appeal is to produce in terms of what we have become. All of this is related to the question of law and grace. Law is obviously irrelevant where we are dealing with basic natures. As law could not compel the man enslaved to sin to produce righteousness, no more can it compel the production of this in one whose nature is to produce it. The law cannot impart life (cp. Gal. 3:21) and, hence, fails to produce righteousness in those having no life and is useless in producing it in those who do. Legislation cannot grow peaches on a peach tree anymore than it can grow them on a pine tree. Life must be imparted by God's grace as a gift (note χάριν in v 15 and χάρισμα in v 23).

6:23. The γὰρ is crucial. It implies that the foundation for the assertions of verses 20-22 (which, in turn, are the climax of Paul's thought from verse 15 on) is to be found in the statement of this verse. Romans 6:23 is rarely related to its context, but the γὰρ signals that the relation is integral to the thought. The old experience in which we produced things which now make us ashamed could have its end result (τὸ τέλος) only in death (vv 20-21). Why? Because (γὰρ) death is the wages of sin. Conversely, the new experience in which we have fruit in holiness has its end result (τὸ τέλος) in eternal life. Why? Because (γὰρ) by contrast (δὲ) to death, God's gift is eternal life. (To be noted is the fact that the paying of wages is the end of a process preceded by what has earned them; but the giving of the gift is the beginning of a process, followed by use of the gift. Hence, Paul is saying that for our old experience (verses 20-21), the end is death because that's how sin is paid off when it is over; but for the new experience (v 22), the end is eternal life because that's how God began it with His free gift. In short, death ends sin's course because there is no other end, but life ends righteousness' course because that's what begins that course. Implied is the basic truth that eternal life is not static, but productive (cp. John 10:10 and 4:14). It begins with the free gift (χάρισμα), the proper use of which can produce more of the same as an end (τέλος) of Christian experience; but it can only be an end to an experience for which as a gift it has provided a beginning. The principle is equally true of human life. The life of the new-born infant is always the gift of its parents (cp. Jas. 2:16-18, for example), but that life proceeds to grow and expand and, indeed, to reproduce itself in grandchildren. Life, then, produces life, but never so unless first received as a gift. This holds for natural life and eternal life.

In other words, all forms of human life, whether natural or supernatural, begin with someone else bestowing that life, and thus the life enjoyed, however much it develops and expands, is a gift. Of course, χάρισμα here harks back to a discussion of God's gift in 5:12-21. There eternal life is referred to basically as the result of God's gift, rather than as the gift itself. Righteousness seems there to be designated God's gift (cp. 5:17). Yet the wording of the section implies that life is an intrinsic part of that gift (cp. 5:18, εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς). But when the attribute eternal is first added (5:21), eternal life is there clearly a result of the experience described. Paul thus reserves for the climax of 6:23 the explicit statement that eternal life is itself the divine gift. But though unstated until now, the ground for it is unmistakably well-prepared; for if we are, in fact, alive to God and can express that life by obedience—if, in other words, we can walk in newness of life after being baptized into Christ's death—it is inevitable that we should conclude that God has given us life in order that we might experience it.

This is precisely what verses 22-23 affirm. We end up (τέλος) with eternal life as a result of serving God, precisely because God (γάρ) has given us that life as a gift for that very purpose in the first place.

CHAPTER 7

7:1. Verses 15-23 of chapter 6 are in some sense parenthetical. In 6:14, Paul had affirmed that sin will not rule us because we are not under law but under grace. Then in verses 15-23 he rebuts the suggestion that not being under law gives a license to sin. In fact, our experience of God's χάρις in His χάρισμα to us of eternal life makes the production of righteousness the only natural expression of our inner being. Having settled this point, he returns to the thought that freedom from the law is the key to sin's loss of power (notice οὐ κυριεύσει, 6:14) over us. This idea is developed in the verses that follow.

To begin with, as all those who know the law will realize, the authority of the law is life-long. (Note the occurrence of κυριεύει here; cp. 6:14.) As surely as a woman is subject for life to her husband, so man under the law is subject to the law for life. The idea of lordship is basic to comprehending the sense in which we are married to the law; also to be married to Christ is to be under His personal authority.

7:2-3. The thought of the law's lordship over man for the duration of his life leads naturally into the marriage illustration. Only death can break that relationship legitimately. (Matthew 19:9 is the only New Testament exception allowed.) Otherwise, a new marriage constitutes adultery.

7:4. The human illustration is not perfect since in our case it is not the law under whose headship we have stood which has died, but we ourselves. (The ὑμεῖς most probably includes Paul's entire readership, Gentile as well as Jew, for the law is an expression of God's moral character and as such imposes responsibility on all who know of it. Cp. γινώσκουσι γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ, I speak to those who know the law. And what is more, the law is even written on the hearts of those who know it not—cp. 2:15. Hence, in a sense, all mankind is wedded to God's law.)

Death, then, in the case of our marriage to the law is, as in human marriage, the only effective instrument for breaking our obligation to that law. But the death we have experienced for that purpose was not for us a physical experience. Rather, the physical experience belonged to Christ and we only come in to it through the body of Christ (διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ). The reference, doubtless, is to His physical body, though His spiritual body, the Church, may be latently in view. In any case, baptism by the Spirit is involved (cp. 6:3-4). But since His death has become our death, His life becomes ours as well; and this constitutes our marriage to Him as the risen One (τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι).

In fact, the essence of marriage is the blending of two lives into one, and here we are merged into His risen life. And as out of the intimacy of marriage comes the fruit of children, so out of the life of intimacy with Christ, living in and with Him, comes the fruit of good works—the practical righteousness referred to, for example, at 6:13, 22. In fact, the righteousness of the law itself, as 8:4 would suggest, so out of the marriage comes the fruit of good works which are for God. (Notice the τῷ Θεῷ.) But it is only within this new marriage that such a result is possible—in short, only under grace—for the old headship of the law produced the opposite effect.

7:5. For in our unsaved days (Ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί), the effect of the law was to produce the passions of sin (τὰ παθήματα... τοῦ νόμου), with the result that the members of our body (notice the τοῖς μέλεσιν) became vehicles for the production of sinful fruit—so rotten and corrupt as to produce only death (τῷ θανάτῳ, the dative standing in contrast with τῷ Θεῷ in v 4, but

suggesting that death was the beneficiary of our wrong acts because through them we were being led to it and were under its dominion—that is, both ruled us [5:17], and it was our end [6:21] and our pay [6:23]).

7:6. Hence, only when our relationship to the law has been annulled (κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου –we have been annulled from the law), an annulment possible only by our death to the very thing that restrained us from fruitfulness to God (notice ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα –“in which we were restrained”), are we able to serve (δουλεύειν) in a fresh and vital way. (Contrast between ἐν καινότητι Πνεύματος and παλαιότητι γράμματος is variegated. It is obviously the new vs. the old, but also the internal vs. the external, and the fresh – καινότητι –vs. the infirm.) Like an old man past the prime of life and unable to produce new life from his marriage relationship, so the law lacks the potency to quicken us to the experience of eternal life, Only grace can do that—that is, the grace that expresses itself in our vital union with the risen Christ. The life in us is God’s gift and is the secret of true vitality and energy for service.

The reference here to Πνεύματος also anticipates the indispensable ministry of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, by whom alone we can genuinely experience that life. To be married to Christ, then, and to be under grace are the same thing. The vital, fresh, new spirit we possess is the spirit of the risen Christ. We contrast the ancient or old law, which is like a dead letter, unable to impart the power of life to those under its dominion. The letter always remains an external while man’s need is inward, requiring a new heart and a new life—newness of spirit.

7:7-8a. It is not, however, to be concluded from the fact that we were restrained from holiness by the law (cp. κατειχόμεθα in v 6) and, therefore, needed to be delivered from it, that the law itself is evil. Paul emphatically denies this conclusion here. Rather, the law is like a searchlight exposing sin, bringing it to man’s knowledge. Yet herein precisely lies the problem. The law gives strength to sin (cp. 1 Cor. 15:56) by focusing man’s mind on sin. Hence, Paul had been unaware, or would have been, that lust itself was sin—that is, the desire, rather than just the deed—had not the law forbidden coveting.

The result was (v 8a) that sin found its opportunity in the very consciousness of sin which the law imparted and every kind of lust was the result. Psychologically, it is inexorable for man to focus on a negative, and a pressure is thus aroused that makes the violation of that negative extremely probable and increasingly so as the tension of resistance heightens.

7:8b-9. What this means is that sin lies dormant—that is, dead in the terminology of the text—very often until aroused by the law. In short, the law precipitates rebellion, not because of its being of itself sinful, but because *man* is. For sinful man to focus on sin is for him to be placed in a frame of reference where sin is easily committed. What Paul has said, touching his experience with lust, is of a general validity for the experience of all men. But verse 8b seems to start a transition to a particular kind of experience—namely, a Christian one. (The expression ἔζων is most naturally taken in verse 9 to signify the vital experience and consciousness of Christian life. It seems unlikely Paul would use this verb to describe days when he was dead in trespasses and sins. Indeed, as a regenerate person, it is generally possible to be really alive in our fellowship with God and then suddenly to be confronted by some rule we had not considered. It may be a divine command, as here in Romans, or a human one put forward as divine which will have the same consequence.) The result of our now being focused on a command is to rouse the dormant sin within (the phrase ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνεζήσεν, “sin revived”) and to kill the vital aliveness of our

walk with God (ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον, “and I died”). Implied is the thought that sin, once revived, is committed with this experience of death as its result. This is virtually explicit in verses 10-11, especially in the ἐξηπάτησε of verse 11. (With this thought should be compared Rom. 8:13.) What is involved is not the possession of eternal life, but the conscious experience of it. To enjoy eternal life experientially is to live. To lose that enjoyment is to die. (It is transparent that in Rom. 7:9 Paul cannot mean physical death, just as he cannot mean loss of salvation.)

7:10-11. Hence, though the divine intention behind the commandment was that man should live by doing it (cp. Gal. 3:12; Rom. 10:5), the reverse of that intention was actually achieved, namely, death—in this case, an inward experience because Paul did not do it. He disobeyed. Thus, man is invariably held back (cp. v 6, κατεχόμεθα) by the law because sin finds its opportunity in the commandment, having become the focus of man’s thought and, thus, tricks man into the disobedience which kills him in that it deprives him of the experience of divine life. The Garden of Eden, where Satan focused the woman on the negative—when God had emphasized the positive (contrast Gen. 2:16-17 with 3:1)—is a supreme example. Deceived by sin, man lost the tree of life and the garden which surrounded it.

In verses 8a-11, Paul describes the loss of paradise by the believer who has been enjoying fellowship with God. This loss is a genuine psychological experience in which man dies inside. Something goes out of his consciousness. (Hard indeed to describe, but very real. This may be likened to the sudden deadening of a particular joy or pleasure.)

7:12. Ὡστε here equals “therefore” and signifies the commencement of the summation of Paul’s conclusions about the experience recorded in verses 9-11. To begin with, God’s law is, from every standpoint, worthy of approbation.

7:13. Nor can such a good thing ever be thought to be the bearer of death, like a lovely poisoned apple. Rather its function was to reveal the reality (ἵνα φανῆ μαρτία) of sin and its awfulness (ἵνα γένηται καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἀμαρτωλὸς ἢ ἀμαρτία) that sin might become exceedingly sinful. The fact that sin could actually work death in Paul through a good instrument like the law was evidence of sin’s exceeding sinfulness. The law, because it forbade sin, showed sin to be sinful; and because it was a good law, showed it to be very sinful.

7:14. Hence, the true character of the law is spiritual, having both the quality and function of what is conformable to God’s nature; and it is rather man (that is, Paul in this case) who is not spiritual. Rather, Paul can declare himself to be a fleshly person who is like a slave sold over to sin’s control.

7:15. But this realization is accompanied by conflict. Speaking existentially, Paul is mystified by what he does (ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω), still speaking, no doubt, of past struggles as a Christian presented vividly and timelessly in the present tense. He finds himself not doing what he wishes to do and doing what he hates.

7:16-17. But this inner conflict unveils another side of his being than the “I” who is carnal and sold under sin. There is also an “I” that does not sin. This is spiritual schizophrenia; for if he is doing what he does not wish to do, there must be an inner agreement (σύμφημι, a symphony) with the law. This can only mean that in a real sense it is sin itself, not the inward “I,” that disobeys the law.

7:18. As far as the fleshly side of Paul's being is concerned, it contains no good thing; for the inner wish for good finds no expression through his flesh, the body being the only medium for such expression.

7:19-20. Rather, the inner willingness (οὐ γὰρ ὁ θελω—connect this to τὸ θέλειν, v 18) is constantly frustrated, leading to the renewed conclusion that the inner “I” is somehow quite distinct from sin which frustrates it.

7:21-23. What is actually involved is a kind of law that overrules the inner will and produces evil. The inner man (τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον—notice how this idea is now concretely expressed) is now distinguished from the flesh, and although this inner man concurs with and delights in God's law, the body (ἐν τοῖς μέλεσι) is the seat of a contrary law that wars with and overcomes the law of Paul's mind. (Τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου equals τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ of v 22.) That is, the law of Paul's mind is the law of God to which his mind is amenable, his inner man.

Now, too, for the first time the νοῦς is mentioned and is a substantial synonym for ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος. Yet, it has this difference, that it stresses the cognitive activities of the inner man who, at this point, can find no self-expression through the body. His only activity is to will. The body is obeying the contrary law.

7:24-25. This leads to a sense of frustration and despair, the body seeming to be a death house for the apostle. But the experience recorded up to and including verse 24 is in reality past for the apostle, and he knows that God delivers through the Lord Jesus Christ. (The διὰ construction may be formally connected with εὐχαριστῶ, but seems to suggest also that the Lord Jesus is the medium of this deliverance for which Paul thanks God, as though preceded by a ῥύομαι. “I thank God I am delivered through Jesus Christ our Lord.”) But for now he pauses to recapitulate the conclusion true of him at this stage of his experience, that he is presently describing. The mind (equals the inner man) is enslaved (δουλεύω, cp. 6:18) to the law of God, but physically he is bound to the contrary law of sin. How the inner law of his mind can triumph over this law of sin and the body become the vehicle for doing God's will will be explained in chapter 8. In other words, its members must become the instruments of righteousness. How can this be? Chapter 8 will deal with this.

CHAPTER 8

8:1. The judicial servitude (κατάκριμα, cp. 5:16) that has just been described in chapter 7 (the experience of chapter 7 being Paul's personal experience of God's ὀργή) is a condemnation which does not exist for those joined spiritually to Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) provided they walk in harmony, not with the flesh but with the Spirit by whom this union has been created—that is, the Spirit has baptized them into Christ (cp. 6:3-4). Of course, as justified ones, eternal condemnation is impossible for those in Christ Jesus, but justification is not the subject of Romans 7 or 8. Rather, Romans 7 describes the spiritual death-house in which Paul senses his bondage to the law of sin (7:24), and this is the condemnation against which he has struggled in vain in that chapter. It is the condemnation of one who feels sold under sin (7:14).

Notice that the ὀργή of God in Romans 1 finds special expression in man's bodily subjection to passion and lust (1:24), precisely the struggle Paul records in Romans 7 (cp. especially v. 8). The body is a condemned house, and the experience of this condemnation is vanquished by walking in the Spirit. This victory is possible because (notice the γὰρ) of the operation of a law greater than that of the law of sin and death to which Paul found himself enslaved in Romans 7:21-25.

8:2. This new law is the law of the Spirit of the life that is in Christ Jesus. (Notice the τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.) That is, all those who have been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit, and, thus, are in Christ, possess a life the spirit of which is a spirit of victory over sin and death. The term Πνεῦμα here ought to be read as both Spirit and spirit, without any real differentiation between them. This new law is sufficiently powerful that it can cancel the control of the law of sin and death with which Paul has vainly struggled in Romans 7. As long as it was Paul's mind versus the flesh, the law of his mind (cp. 7:23) was continually vanquished; but the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is a personal Spirit whose vital influence in the life is immeasurably greater than that of the unaided regenerate mind. Christian living is not a matter of will power (note 7:18), but the power of the Holy Spirit who vitalizes the life that is ours in Christ. Thus, the Spirit puts into operation in our experience the overriding law of victory over sin which was the inherent principle of our Savior's experience here on earth.

8:3. The law of Moses was inadequate for this task because the flesh was too weak to respond to it, and the law could do nothing but issue commands to a weak and unresponsive body. But now God has sent His own Son in a body fashioned in the likeness of the sinful flesh—like that flesh in all human respects except for sin itself—with the intention that this body be made a sacrifice for sin (καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας). These realities have placed sin itself, the sin that is in human flesh, under a condemnation that subordinates it to the power of the life of God's Son.

The very factor that made the Mosaic law weak, the flesh, is the medium of the victory of God's Son. For in taking a body like sinful flesh, yet sinless, He demonstrated God's power to realize holiness in human flesh. And when He offered that body as a sacrifice for sin, He put sin away as the controlling power in human experience. At the same time, He released His own life in a way that made it available to men, just as bread broken may then be eaten. Paul speaks, therefore, in this verse of two great realities: the incarnation (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας) and the cross (καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας). Both the triumphant holiness of His life and the effectiveness of that life in putting sin away have placed sin itself in a position of handicap.

(Notice that κατέκρινε is cognate to κατάκριμα, and κατάκριμα conveys something of the idea of a handicap; that is, it is a judgment under which someone or something labors.) The life of Christ lived and poured out executes the judicial sentence against the sin that is in human flesh, because in the incarnation and at the cross a higher law than that of sin and death is enacted for redeemed men; and the Spirit of that life imparted to us can make that law an effective reality in our experience in that the law of sin and death is experientially annulled for us and, instead of us tasting condemnation through continual defeat, it is sin that tastes condemnation by continual defeat.

8:4. Thus, the righteous requirement (δικαίωμα) of the law which could never be realized under the law itself, because that law could impart no vitality to counteract the weakness of the flesh, can be carried out by us (for πληρωθῆ, cp. Matt. 5:17) as we reject the life lived in accordance with fleshly impulses and live it in this new energy imparted by the Spirit of Christ.

(Now I have an added note on 8:3, 4. The life which is in Christ Jesus, cp. v. 2, is, of course, the very life which He manifested while here on earth. The limitation of Christ is one of the great themes of the New Testament and the essence of discipleship. The law gave us nothing to imitate, rather it simply enunciated a series of prescriptions. People respond to people, and when the weakness (το ἀδύνατόν) of the law had become sufficiently manifested in human experience, God did not send a law but a person in our likeness—8:3. Thus, God furnished a living personal pattern for the righteousness He desired of us—Christ coming not in sinful flesh but in the likeness of sinful flesh and, hence, sinless; and, thus, we find in Him our model.

(But somehow the gap between a perfect model and imperfect imitators must be bridged and a way found to set aside the guilt and frustration of our failures. Hence, God sent His Son not only as a man who could be our model (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας), but as a man who could be, as well, our mediator (καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας). Thus, in one person both pattern and propitiation are provided (cp. 1 John 2:1, 2) so that our pursuit of conformity to the pattern is never hindered for lack of a propitiation to which we can have constant recourse as grounds for restoration from sin.

(Neither of these crucial provisions, so needed by human flesh, were provided by the law. Hence, it was weak through the flesh. The law could command but could never exemplify, as could He who was like us. And it could condemn but could never forgive, as can He who paid for sin. Thus, the coming of One who provided for men in sinful flesh both an adequate model and mediator was a death-knell for the sin in our flesh. Hence, sin stood condemned in the flesh. That is, it stood under sentence of death which can now be executed by us by walking in the Spirit (cp. v. 13). The law could not bring sin under this kind of condemnation. That is, it could impart no power to put it experientially to death in our lives. Rather, under the law it was sin that lived and Paul who died (Rom. 7:9). Paul found condemnation, not the sin, in his flesh in Romans 7. But in Romans 8, Paul escapes condemnation (8:1) and lives (8:2), while sin in his flesh, having been condemned by the sending of God's Son can now be put to death in his experience in the body (8:13). Thus, in essence, 8:3 declares that the law, because of its demonstrated weakness and failure to influence the flesh to holiness, was weak through the flesh. (Διὰ τῆς σαρκός, in 8:3, is at once an allusion to human nature per se and to its sinful tendencies.)

(Because of its demonstrated weakness and failure to influence the flesh to holiness, the law was unable to bring sin under the kind of condemnation which could lead to its death in our experience, but the coming of our model and mediator, God's Son, did this. Hence, verse 4

declares that the righteous requirement (τὸ δίκαιωμα) of the law can now be realized in our lives as the fruits of that condemnation of sin are made real in our lives by walking in the Spirit. By that walk, we execute the sentence sin is under in the flesh.

(The law, it may be added, still remains the expression of God's righteous will for us (cp. 7:12), and the achievement of its righteous requirement is that thing longed for by our inner man (cp. 7:22, and also, 7:16-18); but the law is set aside as itself the means to that end. The life of Christ empowered in us by the Spirit being the new means; so we achieve the standards of the law, not by means of the law, but by means of the life of Christ lived in us by the Spirit. Thus, the coming of Christ is not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17), and His life lived in us leads to its fulfillment in us.)

8:5. The apostle now explains in verses that are crucial to our understanding of Christian experience why it is that the righteousness of the law can indeed be fulfilled in those walking after the Spirit rather than after the flesh (v. 4). The reason is (γὰρ) that those who are κατὰ σάρκα (which equals “walk”) are strongly oriented to and inwardly involved with (φρονοῦσιν) the things of the flesh—that is, sin. The law itself, in fact, turned out to produce this result in man by focusing man's mind on the sin it forbade. The world is full of means by which such orientation to sin can be produced.

Conversely, and the other part of the reason (cp. γὰρ, which embraces the whole statement), those who are κατὰ Πνεῦμα (which equals “walk”) are oriented to, intent on, involved with the things of the Spirit. Τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος may be defined in this context as the things of the life which are in Christ Jesus, since the Spirit is the Spirit τῆς ζωῆς ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ –v. 2. This, of course, implies our subjective experience of that life, but subjective reality of the life of Christ is for and by and inseparably related to the objective reality of that life in Him, as He lived it as our model and laid it down as our mediator (cp. v. 3 in the notes).

The Spirit occupies us with our life in Christ, but, in the final analysis, this is occupation with Christ—both objectively and subjectively—since He is our life. In other words, discipleship, or walking after the Spirit, involves following in His steps and, in particular, thus pursuing the way of the cross (cp. 1 John 2:6). The Spirit occupies us with Christ in such a way that we desire to imitate Him and, in doing so, we actually experience in a vital way the life that is in Christ Jesus. More succinctly, the things of the Spirit are the things of Christ (cp. John 16:13-15). So the righteousness of the law (v. 4) can be fulfilled only by those preoccupied with the things of the Spirit. To be preoccupied with the law itself is to end up preoccupied with sin rather than the Savior and is the road to defeat.

8:6. Verse 6 introduces a second γὰρ in sequence with that of verse 5. The thought taken together is this: (1) the righteousness of the law can be carried out by a Spirit walk rather than a flesh one; (2) this is so because a flesh walk leads to a flesh orientation, while a Spirit walk leads to a Spirit orientation; (3) an orientation is crucial because the flesh kind of orientation produces death while the Spirit kind of orientation produces life and peace.

By θάνατος we are to understand here primarily the kind of death experience Paul has described in Romans 7, especially, verses 10-13 and 24. It is the killing of all conscious enjoyment of the life of God with us. By contrast, ζωὴ here would denote the vital experience of divine life within

us and εἰρήνη a resolution of intense warfare described in Romans 7. (Cp. ἀντιστρατευόμενον in v. 23.)

The idea in φρονοῦσιν, φρόνημα in these verses should probably carry a certain amount of emotional overtone (translated “set your affections” in Colossians 3:2) to the extent that we are not to infer a mere passive or intellectual attachment. Our contemporary slang “to be turned on” is not far off the mark in this connection. Walking after the Spirit, of course, involves a personal ministry to us from the Spirit which captures our hearts for Christ, and it is this kind of φρόνημα that is as capable of altering our behavior toward the will of God as the fleshly φρόνημα altered it away from that will.

(In regard to how these verses may be realized in one’s experience, what I have in mind is that the person who minds the things of the Spirit (which I take to be synonymous with the things of Christ, since the Holy Spirit comes to make the things of Christ known to us and vital to us) is that he is a person who is absorbed in the things of the Spirit, or deeply motivated by them, or preoccupied with them. In the current idiom, he is a man who is “turned on” by the things of the Spirit. Perhaps the best illustration that I can think of is the person who lives, drinks, and thinks baseball all the time. The chances are good, therefore, that his whole life is going to be oriented toward baseball. This is what preoccupies him; this is what he is interested in; this is what motivates him; etc. We find in life and the experiences of life that the things that really absorb us, the things that really interest us, are the things that really change and alter and control our lives.

(It is obvious that a person is only going to be really “turned on” by the things of the Spirit through a ministry of the Spirit. A person to whom the Spirit is not ministering will find frequently that the things of the Spirit are dull and uninteresting or even incomprehensible to him. But, of course, there is also an act of the will involved in this. If we do not turn our minds and thoughts toward the things of the Spirit, we will obviously not be occupied with them. If we allow ourselves to be absorbed in other things, then, quite clearly, those are the things that we are minding. But the mere process of turning our minds and thoughts toward the things of the Spirit *must* be accompanied, it seems to me, by a spirit of dependence on the Spirit to make these things real and vital and interesting and meaningful to us. Of course, and it’s obvious, that attention to the Word and meditation on the Word are an important facet of this. Of course, a person can study the Word extensively and meditate in it extensively and, if his heart is not in tune with the Spirit and the Spirit is not ministering to him, then nothing vital or transforming takes place. But if a person is really giving himself to the things of the Word under the ministry of the Spirit—if Christ is before his heart in all the facets in which Christ is presented—then it seems to me that the effect is accomplished.)

8:7. The necessity for a spiritual mind is now underlined by Paul. The carnal mind leads only to death (cp. v. 6) because there is no way in which its basic hostility (ἔχθρα) toward God can be replaced by submission to His law. Indeed its hostility is rooted in (notice the second γὰρ) its insubordination to the divine will expressed in that law.

8:8. Hence, unregenerate men (Οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες) cannot succeed in pleasing God since they cannot divest themselves of their carnal mind. Paul’s point is that the unsaved man cannot fulfill the righteousness of the law (cp. v. 4). Not that he never does anything commonly regarded as decent and moral (since in the final analysis love for God and man are the underlying essence of

fulfilling the law (cp. Matt. 22:35-40 and Rom. 13:10), but man's blindness to God's love in Christ and consequent inability to return that love (1 John 4:19) reduces human morality to a form of favor-seeking from God which cannot please Him. Man's sin and man's morality alike arise from the basic selfishness and self-seeking carnality of his outlook.

8:9. Christians, however, are ἐν πνεύματι, not ἐν σαρκί. The phrases refer to our basic spiritual state, not the manner of our walk. (Note—and this is very important—Paul uses ἐν here, not κατά; whereas, he uses κατά, not ἐν in vv. 1, 4.) Implicit is the baptism of the Spirit which is, so to speak, something that immerses us in the Spirit. This creates a new inner vitality not possessed by the unregenerate man, a life the nature of which is in harmony with the law of God (cp. 7:22), and which longs for obedient expression (7:15-22). Whereas the inner man of the unsaved is hostile to God and His law, the inner man of the saved person is basically subject to that law (6:18, 22; 7:25). Any other inward state—that is, a state marked by the absence of the Spirit of Christ—is a sign that a person is unregenerate. But Paul's point may be more positive. If you are, in fact, Christ's, then you have His Spirit. Only those who are not His lack that Spirit.

8:10. Thus the quintessential Christian may be described as a living person in His Spirit. (To πνεῦμα often suggests both the human spirit and the Holy Spirit; and it can refer to inhabiting a spiritual corpse—that is, the body having a deadness to the life of God—cp. τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου, 7:24—despite the genuine spiritual presence of that life within. This is, of course, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; for Christ is in us (εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν).) The problem, as portrayed in Romans 7, is how the dead body in which sin dwells (νεκρὸν δι' ἁμαρτίαν) can be made the vehicle for expressing the life of God—that is, how can we present our members as instruments of righteousness to God (cp. 6:12, 13)?

8:11. The solution is found in the quickening power of the Spirit and of the One who raised Jesus from the dead. As He raised Christ to a new order of resurrection of life, so He can raise our mortal bodies (τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν, i.e., these bodies still subject to physical death). He can raise our mortal bodies to the experience of real newness of resurrection life (cp. 6:4). Hence, Christian living and Christian victory is a miracle—a miracle of resurrection—whereas in a dead body, responsive to a sinful world, defeat is hardly surprising. This life is, of course, experienced by us as the Holy Spirit imparts to us a spiritual-mindedness. The potency of such an inward orientation—a kind of orientation impossible for those in the flesh who lack the Spirit—is such that the deadness of the body is overcome and its members become instruments of righteousness. To be spiritually-minded is life and peace, and to be spiritually-minded is to experience resurrection.

The entire principle involved was intimated as far back as 6:4. There, the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to the glory of the Father, and it is implied that this is the means as well by which *we* walk in newness of life. Hence, the ministry of the Spirit is to occupy us vitally with the Father's glory, revealed to us, of course, in His Son. This glory with its variegated facets may be described as τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος (8:15)—the things of the Spirit—with which the man walking after the Spirit is animated. The walk in newness of life thus affected is, therefore, a quickening of our mortal bodies—a spiritual resurrection by the glory of God.

8:12. Since such a wonderful reality is possible by means of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, it follows, therefore (ἄρα οὖν), that we have no kind of obligation to serve the desires of the flesh or to live according to its dictates. Though Paul seemed to be bound to the flesh in Romans 7 and sin appeared to have a mortgage on Paul's body which demanded repeated payment in acts of

sin, this indebtedness to the flesh was an illusion. In fact, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made him free from the law of sin and death (8:2; cp. 6:18), and that liberty was realizable (as v. 12 has just explained) by the quickening power of that same Spirit brought to bear upon Paul's mortal body. No debt to live κατὰ σάρκα actually existed, therefore.

8:13. But there was a choice. The experience of Romans 7 showed clearly that it was possible for a regenerate person to live after the flesh; but it also showed that such living was not living at all, but an experience of death (cp. 7:9-11, 24). The Christian, therefore, who lives in this way, dies—both in the sense of losing all contact experientially with the life of God and, also, in the sense that sin pursued is pursued at last to the end of physical death itself (cp. everywhere in the book of Proverbs). On the other hand, the life of God is experienced vitally by those who allow the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to do His work in our mortal bodies. This involves the quickening of the body itself (v. 12), but the mortifying of its deeds (πνεύματι...θανατοῦτε). For as we permit the Spirit to occupy us with the glory of the Father as revealed in His Son, *we live*; but our sinful habits die in a continuing process. (θανατοῦτε is a present tense and can be so viewed as continuous.) Like dead leaves on a tree, they are pushed off as the new life emerges from within.

The Spirit-led life is a life of sonship since the Spirit we have received is not that of bondage under the law as slaves, but rather that spirit of sonship which prompts our cry to God as our Father. In fact, the Spirit joins with our spirit in claiming before God the relationship of children. This basic relationship implies a double heirship, the latter of which is achieved through sufferings and is equal to mature sonship because it is a co-heirship with the Son. But the sufferings this heirship entails are small compared to the glory which compensates them, a glory so great that creation itself awaits its unveiling in the mature sons who have achieved it. That unveiling will mean the release of creation from the vanity to which it has been subjected so that it can enjoy the same freedom from corruption that all God's glorified children will enjoy.

So, as we know, creation has its agony awaiting the birth of that new age; but we, too, since we have tasted the first fruits of that age by the quickening of our mortal bodies which the Spirit produces in us, join in that agony as we await the full realization of our sonship in the redemption of our body. Thus, the Spirit, who realizes sonship in our experience by His power to liberate from sin, teaches us, thereby, to long for sonship fully enjoyed. He is indeed the πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας, so this life wrought by the Spirit is a salvation pervaded with hope. Necessarily, hope is an unrealized thing which we must await with endurance. The Spirit who wrought the hope also helps us in the weakness we must endure by making the kind of intercessions in our sufferings (στεναγμοῖς, v. 26; cp. στενάζομεν, v. 23) which we are too ignorant to make, on the basis of His own knowledge of the divine will for us.

8:14. The living, of which Paul is speaking (v. 14) is, of course, nothing less than experience of divine life—hence, of divine sonship. The word used for sons—υιοί—is a word which in Paul's thought is a term related to the mature status achieved by the people of God in virtue of their possession of the Holy Spirit, as over against the spiritual infancy of those under the law. (Cp. Gal. 4 for the exposition.) The life Paul has been describing is in contrast to the experience of Romans 7. In Romans 7, Paul struggles under law; but in Romans 8, he lives victoriously by the Spirit. Such a victorious experience in which the Spirit leads (ἄγονται) us is an experience of sonship; hence the statement of this verse.

8:15. This Spirit-led experience of sonship is our true birthright because (γὰρ) we have not received a spirit of bondage, but of adoption. The reference of δουλείας is to the status of one under the law (cp. Gal. 4), and the εἰς φόβον refers to the fear of punishment and lost blessing which always hung over those who lived in that legal relationship. In the context of Romans, with chapter 7 behind us, however, we might also see in δουλείας a reference to the inability of those under law to escape the control of the flesh; but the reference to the law status is, doubtless, primary, as a comparison with Galatians would show. By contrast, the reference in υιοθεσίας seems to be more toward the idea of sonship status rather than the precise idea of adoption. This meaning is suitable in all the passages where it is used here and in verse 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5, and seems almost demanded by the illustration used in Galatians 4. If we had more secular instances, we might well discover this meaning of υιοθεσίας there as well. Of course, Paul may wish to include a nuance of adoption, but an expression like “acceptance as sons” seems closer to the meaning demanded in Galatians 4 and suitable everywhere else. The true spirit (also Spirit)—that is, the true attitude—as well as the true Spirit of God of a Christian is not that of a δοῦλος bound by the law of υἱός led by the Spirit. It is the spirit of acceptance as sons that we have received, and when we are led by the Spirit (v. 14), it is the Πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας who leads us.

Implied in all this is that our principle of life is not obedience because we must (δουλείας) and are afraid not to (εἰς φόβον), but rather our sense of standing and acceptance before God—a sense imparted to us by the Spirit we have received so that we address God as εἰς φόβον, the phrase with its Aramaic and Greek words for “Father.” Hence, at the joining of Jewish and Gentile sons and the privilege being described (Ἀββᾶ) as the more intimate expression may point to the closer position originally occupied by Jewish people to God, but, of course, does not imply any special nearness now over Gentile brethren. Indeed, the whole passage may be on the lips of either Jew or Gentile. The statement of the verse does not imply, necessarily, that one says one of the words and the other the other. A Gentile is now as near as a Jew (cp. Eph. 2:19) and a part of the good olive tree (Rom. 11).

As an illustration of being led by the spirit of sonship, the adult can order his life free of childhood rules and regulations; yet may be more than ever influenced by his father as he now shares his father’s feelings, standards, values, etc. That is, he shares his father’s spirit, and that is the guiding influence in his life. Being led by the Spirit here does not have anything particularly to do with the question of leading in the sense of what ministry do I go into, and this sort of thing. Rather, it is a general way of describing the life that is pictured in Romans 8:1-13. A life that is thus under the influence of the Spirit is a life led by the Spirit.

8:16. The cry that the spirit of acceptance as sons prompts us to make (ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν, v. 15) is one that the Spirit Himself also makes with us and in us. (Cp. the Spirit crying, “Abba, Father,” in Gal. 4:6.) He is our helper in prayer (cp. v. 26), and here Paul is declaring that when our own human spirit makes the claim to sonship before God in prayer by crying, “Father,” that the indwelling Spirit also cries, “Father;” thus, adding His testimony to ours, that we are God’s children. This reinforcement of our claim before God to this relationship (in the Old Testament, two is the number of adequate witness) should heighten our sense of privilege and heighten our sense of access to God and is, in fact, one of the explicit ways that the Spirit leads us in the experience of sonship. In other words, the Spirit-led man is a son of God (v. 13) and is one who, among other things, is led to God in prayer as a child crying out to a father. This sense of

relationship in the presence of God undergirds the hope of heirship in glory which motivates him to the victorious way of life Paul has described in Romans 8:1-12.

8:17. The apostle's emphasis on the dignity of our relationship to, and standing in, the presence of God is now augmented by the additional thought of heirship. In vv. 1-2, Paul has outlined the way of victory over sin. Verse 16 points out that those who pursue that way—that is, are led by the Spirit of God—are identifiable as His sons. This is the transition to a section (vv. 14-29) which will stress the dignity and value of this experience, an experience which is inseparable from suffering. But the sufferings are an integral part of our sonship experience which, in its fullest expression, is patterned after Christ's own experience and which leads us to conformity with Him in glory (cp. v. 29).

Hence, Paul argues, if we are, in fact, children (εἰ δὲ τέκνα), we are also heirs. But the heirship he describes is two-fold. We are κληρονόμοι Θεοῦ, and also, provided we suffer, συγκληρονόμοι Χριστοῦ. Inasmuch as Christ is the first-born among the sons of God (cp. v. 29), it is reasonable to think of His own heirship as being the double portion of the first-born. Hence, all believers have a basic heirship based on their relationship to God as children—in this capacity, inheriting the hope of eternal life, which is the proper expectation of all the saved (cp. Titus 3:5-7). But they also have a potential share in the double portion of the first-born if they are willing to share His sufferings in order to share His glory. For this, compare 2 Timothy 2:12.

Of course, our Lord possesses an inherent glory by virtue of His eternal deity; but He also possesses an inherited glory by virtue of His manhood and His submission as man to sufferings, entailed in the will of God for Him. If we, therefore, similarly submit to such sufferings, which is a co-suffering with Christ (notice here συμπάσχόμεν), we can also become co-heirs (συγκληρονόμοι) in a co-glorification (συνδοξασθῶμεν). But whereas the first conditional element (εἰ δὲ at the beginning of the verse) in our basic heirship depends only on God's grace to us which makes us children (τέκνα in vv. 16-17 [the υἱοὶ of v. 14 are those who are *led* by God's Spirit]), the second conditional element (εἴτερ) involves our willingness to bear the sufferings that go with fellowship with Christ who also suffered. This leads to a full-fledged adult sonship (cp. υἱός, v. 14).

Notice that I'm pointing out here that the words τέκνα and υἱός seem to be used differently. We are τέκνα by being born into the family of God; we are υἱοὶ if, as those born into the family of God we are also led by the Spirit into the victorious life he describes. Now if we are children, we are heirs on this basic universal level among the children of God; but, if as sons, we suffer with Christ, then we become co-heirs or joint-heirs with Christ.

Paul, thus, implies that the experience of adult sonship (v. 14), in which the spirit leads us in a life of victory over sin, is built up on the foundation of our assured position as children and heirs in the family—from which assured standing we can reach out to the double portion of co-heirship with Christ through suffering, always aware that the Spirit goes with us in prayer to God since prayer is our major resource in suffering. And He joins with us in our claim to the Fatherhood of God with all the attendant mercy and help in our needs which that relationship implies.

It may be suggested that the phrase Πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας, verse 15, with its obvious reference to υἱοί, verse 14, is the spirit of mature sonship which God imparts to us, a sort of instinctive aspiration after this mature relationship we inherently have as τέκνα. That is, the ultimate goal of

our personal prayers is full sonship experienced in co-heirship and co-glorification. Verses 15-16 anticipate the truth of verses 26-27. Verse 17 finds its counterpart in verses 28-29.

8:18-19. But the sufferings which are prerequisite to joint heirship are to Paul unworthy to be compared with the glory to which they lead. He says this despite the extent of his own sufferings (cp. 2 Cor. 11:23-29). He is able to view them this way because (γάρ, v. 19) that glory is eagerly awaited by creation itself. As a man who spent much time out of doors, Paul must have felt the awe and wonder of creation even now while it is still subject to vanity (cp. v. 20), and when he contemplated how glorious it would yet be when freed from such bondage, he must have caught a tremendous conception of the glory of that future day; for he knew that the destiny of creation waited on the destiny of the sons of God (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ equal the συγκληρονόμοι Χριστοῦ of verse 17—cp. v. 14), so that he could sense the glory of God's sons by sensing the potential glory of creation.

Of course, joint heirship is to share in the reign of Christ—His kingdom glory being the reward of His suffering—so that what creation really awaits is the appearance (ἀποκάλυψιν) of its new owners. Being presently inhabited by sinful man, creation is subject to vanity as man is (man's destiny being to rule creation, cp. Psalm 8); but when the sons of God inherit the creation as they share Christ's reign, then the dominion of these glorified owners will mean glorious liberty (v. 21) for the creation they rule. It is because of this relationship, therefore, that Paul is able to measure future glory by the realization that creation, already so splendid, waits for it.

8:20-21. The many barren, destructive things with which nature (ἡ κτίσις) is presently marred (Paul saw them often in his travels) are tokens of the vanity (ματαιότητι) to which it has been made subject, quite apart from any impulse or wish of its own (οὐχ ἐκούσα, not willingly); for nature has not sinned—man has—and it has been subjected by a God who willed it so. (This is the significance of διὰ in verse 20.) But He has imposed this subjection in an atmosphere of hope (ἐφ' ἐλπίδι). For, though nature exhibits many facets of vanity, yet its destructions are not total. Its desolations are not universal. Its dangers are often temporary, so that hope is a thread which runs like a silver lining through all the somber features it displays to us.

In this respect, therefore, nature is not only a medium through which God speaks to man about Himself (cp. Rom. 1:20), but is also a medium through which He speaks to us about ourselves and the sufferings which we have, despite our loyalty to God, and the hope we can have in them. Nature, therefore, has had imposed upon it an experience of unwilling, uninitiated sufferings, like those which strike God's people; and in like manner it shares our hope to be free from them. The hope is nothing less than release from enslavement from ruinous, hurtful experience (τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς) and participation in the liberty from such things, which is precisely the liberty of God's children.

In verse 21, the word τέκνον, not υἱὸν occurs since it is into the portion of the heirs of God, not the joint-heirs, that the creation is to be brought. All of God's children will some day be gloriously free from every form of φθορᾶς, whether physical or spiritual; and this freedom is our inheritance, the unfettered enjoyment of eternal life. But the joint-heirs have more. It is they who rule the creation—the creation serving rather than ruling—so that when Paul speaks of what creation waits for, he speaks of the joint heirs. But when he speaks of creation's future portion, he links that with the portion of all the heirs. And though the future awarding of the double

portion to the first-born sons of God is what brings creation's freedom, that freedom itself is the liberty of all God's children.

8:22. What has been said about the creation has been based on (γὰρ) the fundamental perception (οἶδαμεν) that the creation is, in fact, in pain (συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει). The variegated forms of life which creation exhibits to our view are obviously affected by its bondage to vanity (v. 20) and to corruption (v. 21). (For example, on the moon, a dead world, the conception of suffering of nature would be out of place.) They suffer as a result of all the imperfections in the creation, and it is precisely because they possess life that they do so. In fact, συνωδίνει suggests the image of a pregnant woman giving birth to a child, and with this word Paul sustains the note of hope with which he views the sufferings of creation. A new world is being born out of this suffering. Creation, therefore, is virtually seen as an animate thing by Paul, undergoing agonies which only animate things can experience with the virtually audible groaning over them. The γὰρ of this verse is almost equal to "yes." We know, but not only it, but ourselves, also.

8:23. So herein lies the parallel with our own experience; for we too are groaning, and we do so with some note of expectation (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι), which marks the groaning of creation itself. (Cp. συνωδίνει, v. 21; see v. 19.) And just as creation groans, being alive, so do we by virtue of the first fruits of the Spirit which are ours—the first fruits by which we, too, live.

The expression τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος need not be confined to the possession of the Spirit only, but within the context of Romans 8 is naturally understood of the experience of the spirit described in this chapter. Basic to this experience is the quickening work of the Spirit in our mortal bodies (cp. v. 11) by which they become vehicles for expressing the life of God (v. 13). Such a spiritual resurrection is transparently a foretaste—a first fruit—of the ultimate resurrection or transformation by which the body will be wholly and eternally delivered from sin so that it is a perfect vehicle for that same life. Hence, our present experience of living by the Spirit (cp. v. 13; v. 2) creates a hunger for—even a groaning after—the full experience which will be ours at the redemption of our body. The thought then is that what the Spirit does now in our mortal body creates a desire for our immortal body, since it is a foretaste of that.

The first fruits of the Spirit here is more than just possessing the Spirit, but is the first fruits of what He is going to do for us eternally. That is to say, the victorious life described in this chapter is the first fruits of the full life that we will live in the future and, thus, to receive the first fruits of the Spirit is more than merely to receive the Spirit; it is to know the experience described in Romans 8:1-13.

In like manner, Paul has not only stressed life by the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-13), but also sonship—an experience that is ours as we are led by the Spirit (v. 14) in the life that Paul has described in the first 13 verses. This sonship experience accords with the spirit of adoption which we have received, which prompts our consciousness at filial relationship to God (vv. 15-17); and once again, the sonship we taste now as the Spirit leads us into deliverance from sin is a foretaste, a first fruit, of our future experience of it. Hence, the redemption of our body which we await is nothing less than the adoption (υιοθεσία) wherein our initial experience of this (v. 13) is replaced by the full unhindered experience thereof.

Hence, also, we groan because we have tasted what that adoption will really be like. Thus the term τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος gathers up into itself the whole presentation of chapter 8—

relates our sufferings to the experiences in the Spirit that the chapter unfolds. By irony, our victory over sin through the Spirit creates a form of suffering we did not have before because now that we have tasted a measure of release from the body of this death (cp. 7:25), we groan inwardly (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) over the weakness and frailties and imperfections that remain, and which will only be done away with at the adoption when our bodies, like all creation, are totally liberated from bondage to φθορᾶ—that is, from bondage to moral and material corruption (v. 21).

8:24. Thus those who have tasted the liberating first fruits of the Spirit which are an anticipation of future resurrection have been saved in hope (τῆ ἐλπίδι). Paul's word, ἐσώθημε, is here the practical equivalent of τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες and has special reference to the salvation from wrath he has expounded to its climax in Romans 8. The aorist tense is due to the perspective of ἔχοντες, which conditions the statement of verse 23 on actual participation in the first fruits wrought by the Holy Spirit, which equals verse 11 or verses 13-14—that is, life by the Spirit's power. That is, if we have these first fruits, we have been saved in the sense that they imply; though we who taste the Spirit's quickening power in our bodies groan, groaning associated with expectation (ἀπεκδεχόμεθα, v. 23). So that such an experience of salvation embodies hope—a hope, in fact, intensified by the foretaste of the future that such a quickening salvation provides. Yet, Paul continues, the nature of hope is that it is an unseen reality; once seen—that is, experienced—it no longer belongs in the region of hope.

8:25. Hence, if we are hoping for the realization of something unseen, our proper course is to await it in the spirit of endurance (δι' ὑπομονῆς). The point Paul is making is that the very nature of our salvation experience is that we are focused by that experience on an unseen expectation and that this is a call to us to endure and to expectantly await, despite the sufferings. (Notice ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.) Since ἀπεκδεχόμεθα (v. 25) picks up the same verb from verse 23, verses 24-25 may be regarded as an explanatory elaboration of verse 23. The waiting there described is an essential element in our salvation—salvation being in hope (τῆ ἐλπίδι) and hope being by nature what it is, so the groaning which marks the waiting of verse 23 is to be endured as we hope (v. 25b).

8:26. But in this experience of a frail suffering body, we do not find ourselves without help; for the Spirit who indwells our bodies—who in fact quickens them in that salvation from sin's control—gives help as well. (Ὡσαύτως δὲ perhaps points to this new additional work of the Spirit.) He gives us help as well in the midst of these frailties (ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν); for it is particularly in the midst of these sufferings that we are most ignorant of the proper requests, our natural inclination being to pray for relief. It is just here that the Spirit can help by praying sympathetically and yet wisely. Indeed, our tendency to groan when we are overburdened by our trials and to be unable to articulate our feelings and/or our desires aright provides the occasion for the Spirit's intercession (ὑπερεντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις). Hence, when we feel most deeply weighed down by suffering, even to tears or sighs or groans, we may take comfort in the fact that the Spirit mingles His prayers with these.

8:27. And God, who has ability to scrutinize the heart more perfectly than we ourselves—whose heart it is—can in the process of searching our hearts be completely cognizant of the objective (τὸ φρόνημα) of the Spirit's praying; for the Spirit prays from our heart. And this cognition is, by implication, virtually intuitive with God because, in fact, the Spirit's prayer for us is precisely

what God wants for us. The ὅτι clause is interesting as suggesting a reason for God's cognition of the Spirit's mind. It is as though the unutterable groanings, or the unverbilized prayers of the Spirit, which are immediately comprehended by God whose Spirit that is and whose wishes the Spirit in this fashion articulates. The Spirit, while both distinct from us and from God as the third person of the Godhead, is, nevertheless, here seen as united so closely with our spirit that our groanings are His prayers and united so closely with God that His prayers are God's thoughts and aims.

8:28. Such prayers, when answered, can only lead to the ultimate good of those for whom they are made; and our knowledge that the Spirit prays thus is a basis of the knowledge that all things do, thus, work out. Yet it is to be noted that the comforting assertion of this verse applies to those who love God (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν Θεόν), which is not the same as a prediction made about every Christian (cp. John 14:15, 23-24). In the larger context, Paul has been speaking of those who are led by the Spirit and are, thus, experiencing sonship to God (v. 14). Part of that experience, he insists, is the suffering that leads to joint heirship with the Son (vv. 17, 18, etc.). Thus, within the discussion of the suffering of God's sons, Paul is particularly thinking of how God works out all things for their glorification with Christ (cp. συνδοξασθῶμεν, v. 17). Hence, those who love God are none other than these sons whose Spirit-led life is the life of obedience and victory outlined in 8:1-13.

Romans 8 may be subdivided thus: vv. 1-13, knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection (cp. Phil. 3:10); vv. 14-39 equals knowing Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings. Those who know Him in the first way—that is, are led by the Spirit of God—will inevitably walk a path in which He may be known in the second way. Thus, Romans 8:1-13 leads naturally into Romans 8:14-39.

No one, in fact, can avoid human suffering. It is universal, and, even in nature, suffering is present, as Paul has shown. Thus, only those who love God and, thus, live in communion with Christ can be assured that it will work out for good. This is because those who experience it in this way experience it in accord with the purpose of their calling—τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν. This phrase I take to be oppositional to τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν Θεόν and gives another fact about these. Yet there is also a sort of a causal nuance to the thought, almost “since they are the called...”

8:29. That purpose is nothing less than conformity to the image of God's Son, since it is His destiny to be the first-born among many brethren. From verse 17 it is clear that suffering is a part of the process that makes us more like Him. Of course, in a human family, there are different degrees of likeness between members, ranging all the way from a basic family likeness to the closeness of identical twins. So, we may surmise, will be the heavenly family, all Christians sharing the basic likeness to Christ of perfect freedom from sin and a body fashioned like unto His glorious body and, thus, plainly recognizable as His brethren. But obedient Christians who have suffered with Him will display an even greater likeness to the First-born and will share, thus, the First-born's portion (cp. v. 17). Hence, those who live by the Spirit a life expressive of their love for God can experience suffering as a part of this eternal purpose which is bringing them to such a likeness to Christ that they can be joint heirs with Him. While the sufferings of the disobedient believer are experiences of divine chastening and judgment and, hence, are of another spiritual quality even though the specific suffering may be identical with that of an obedient believer. If, indeed, likeness to Christ in a glorious joint-heir ship is the ultimate

outcome of our sufferings, it is clear, how, in the last analysis, they work together for good (v. 28, συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν). But God's purpose has Christ, not us, as its center. We are predestined to be like Him, basically that *He* might be something (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτόν, etc.). And, as in the case of Adam, it was not good that man should be alone so that a helpmeet who was like Adam, as the animals were not, was needed; so it has pleased God that the universe over which His Son shall preside shall have a great multitude of people whose brotherhood to Christ as the First-born permits them to share His joy and glory and, thus, enhance both.

8:30. Viewed thus Christo-centrifugally, it is inconceivable that the predestinate purpose of God should fail for any individual. Hence, in a statement that stretches from eternity past (προώρισεν) through God's effectual call (ἐκάλεσε) and its result (ἐδικαίωσεν) to eternity future (ἐδόξασε), Paul stresses the inviolability of God's ongoing design so that those whom (οὓς) He predestinates are seen as identical with those whom (οὓς τούτου) He glorifies. (Note that the οὓς τούτους structure is triadic.)

8:31. This leads to a significant conclusion (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα). In view of God's positive design for us (εἰ ὁ Θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) which verse 30 has affirmed as certain to be accomplished, it follows that nothing can, in the last analysis, be against us. The τίς, while ostensibly personal, in fact personifies every conceivable opponent to our good. This is demonstrated by verses 32-39. No enemy really exists if we perceive in εἰ ὁ Θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν the extent to which God's eternal purpose puts Him on our side. The verb to be supplied in τίς καθ' ἡμῶν would most naturally be εἰσὶν and the point would be no one—nothing—is against us.

It should be observed that the first person plural pronoun which prevails from the beginning of Paul's discussion of suffering (cp. v. 18) is, in the first place, very easily seen as quite personal to Paul (notice the singular of λογίζομαι in v. 18), though the plural allows the readers to include themselves insofar as the apostle's experience fits theirs. Note that in verse 32, ἡμῶν πάντων makes the first person universal to Christians at this point, but this may imply that the simple first person to Paul's mind is narrower. Yet in verses like 29-30, where a universal experience of Christians is in view, the first person is not used. Yet because Paul bases so much of his own experience on what may be predicated of all believers, the shift back to first person is quite natural in verse 31. But there is care in such shifting, for it is those who love God, like or with Paul, and those whose lives conform to God's purpose (τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὓσιν, v. 28) who can see in that purpose the elimination of every opponent so that no one is really against them. To say that no one is against us here in verse 31 is substantially equivalent to πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν (v. 28). For if every experience is ultimately good, none is then, in the final analysis, against us, however much it may seem so (cp. Jacob's error in Gen. 42:36).

8:32. The reason this is true is found in God's unbounded generosity (χαρίζομαι). The gift of His Son implies a willingness to give the universe. (τὰ πάντα is a formula in Paul for this, so the gift of His Son implies a willingness to give the universe as well—τὰ πάντα being taken here as a reference to the universe.) After all, the Son is greater than the universe (cp. Col. 1:13-18), and the greater gift makes the lesser fully credible. But this is just what all things that seem to be against us are making possible—a gift of the universe; for suffering leads to joint heirship with Christ (v. 17), and, of course, He is heir of all things (cp. Heb. 1:2). To be a joint heir with Him is, then, to share the universe that was made for Him and, thus, to reach the fullest personal fruition of the eternal purpose of God, that we should be like His Son. Hence, properly viewed,

the purpose God has for every Christian can become for the obedient Christian who suffers the foundation of his confidence that God is working out that purpose as richly as possible through all the things that so superficially seem to be against him.

In Jacob's moment of despair, to which we referred a moment ago in Genesis 42:36, all things were working together for his good; and the exalted Joseph, who possessed Egypt, was preparing to share it with Jacob and his brothers. Thus the type fits the truth of Romans 8 where sorrow and suffering are leading to joint heirship with the exalted Christ.

8:33. Those who are involved in the predetermined purpose of God (vv. 29-30)—that is, God's elect (ἐκλεκτῶν Θεοῦ)—are obviously the object of divine approbation and love. (Love is implicit in election.) They are those for whom God did not spare His own Son and toward whom His disposition is one of willingness to give all things. No one can successfully interfere with the favor and love that God has by intruding against them in successful accusation (ἐγκαλέσει) implies to go to law against it, cp. Acts 19:28), since the Judge of all the earth already has adjudicated in their favor by justifying them.

8:34. Nor is such adjudication so insufficiently founded as to leave room for a condemning voice (Τίς ὁ κατακρίνων), for it is Christ who died. Thus, the Judge who pronounces the elect justified is Himself just in doing so through the cross of Christ (Rom. 3:26). Hence, the divine electing love has perfectly cordoned us off from any legitimate question about the favor and acceptance we have. The cross is the recommendation of God's love to us (cp. 5:8) which leads to justification (cp. 5:9a).

But God's favor and grace do not stop at the cross; there is more (μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ): Christ also rose. This implies, against the background of the epistle as a whole, that His life also is a vehicle for God's love. This is in terms of the newness of life in which we are enabled now to walk. (Note how this additional effect of God's recommended love is implied by the πολλῷ μᾶλλον at 5:9.) But even this is not all; for, additionally (note ὅς καὶ), Christ is at God's right hand and intercedes for us. Neither of these two last facts has been previously mentioned in Romans, whereas the death of Christ has been clearly linked with our justification, just as it is here linked also with that. And the resurrection of Christ has been linked with our new experience of life and our deliverance, thus, from divine ὀργῆ. The session and intercession of Christ in heaven are not previously linked with any expounded truth. Their appearance here in a context dealing with our triumph over suffering (cp. v. 37) implies they are linked in Paul's mind with that. For, in fact, the universal control and authority over all events, our personal sufferings among them, are implied in the Savior's being at God's right hand; and the aid for our needs and suffering is implied by the Savior's intercession. These are implications making both of these newly mentioned truths most suitable to the context of suffering, and they are obviously the secret of victory over it.

Note that both Christ in heaven and the Spirit in our hearts intercede in our time of suffering, thus bathing the heavenly throne in irresistible prayer on our behalf. Hence, the love commended by the cross is extended in its effects by the resurrection, the heavenly session, and the intercessory prayer of Christ. Each additional step beyond the Χριστός ὁ ἀποθανών only removes us that much further from the ὁ κατακρίνων who is rendered ineffective by the cross itself, but all the more so by these additional realities which consummate in favorable rather than condemning supplication before God's throne. (Notice that κατακρίνω can be contrasted with

ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ.) This is God's electing love raised to the nth power and thus rendered our assured and inalienable resource (see v. 35a). Every accusing voice is swallowed up by that love just when in our time of suffering precisely such a voice tends to rise either from unbelieving men or from Satan himself. And the apostle's return to the theme of justification here, as a starting point for our appreciation for the love of Christ from which there is no separation, is psychologically to the point; for, apart from assurance of this truth, the suffering saint might well be led to doubt whether his experience is really expressed divine love or were an indication that some case or accusation might be successfully brought against him before God who allowed him such troubles. But the apostle banishes the possibility of such self-doubt by this renewed affirmation of justifying love and its gracious sequels, culminating in intercession for us at the throne of heaven by the very One whose death has given us immunity from all charge.

Note how our assurance of God's love in tribulation is traced back to its manifestation at the cross and in our justification in Romans 5:1-9a. Note also that 5:9 carries that love forward to our experience of Christ's risen life, thus going half the distance covered in Romans 8:34. Actually, Romans 5:9b and forward to 8:13 elaborate that love in our experience of the resurrection life in Christ Jesus by the power of the Spirit. 8:14-39 consummate our consideration of God's love by viewing its expression toward us in the realm of suffering by which God designs to give us, with His Son, all things. (Perhaps σὺν αὐτῷ in 8:32 means jointly with Him—i.e., we possess τὰ πάντα in joint-heirship with the Son thus given; cp. the σὺν compounds in v. 17). Hence, we have God's love in our justification (5:1-9a), God's love in our sanctification (5:9b-8:13), God's love in our suffering (8:14-39). But already 5:3-5 anticipates 8:14-39. So, a seed-plot for the further development of this section is laid out in Romans 5:1-9, and the sections relate to the themes that are enunciated there.

8:35. With such acceptance before God secured by Christ's love expressed in the cross, His resurrection, His session and intercession, Paul cannot conceive of anything capable of severing this bond of the Savior's love. The troubles enumerated are somewhat personified as indicated by the Τίς and represent ineffectual enemies who have no power to intervene between us and the love of Christ. In Θλίψις and στενοχωρία and διωγμός, we have the pressures of life. In λιμός and γυμνότης, we have the deprivations of life; while in κίνδυνος and μάχαιρα, we have the insecurities of life. The words, thus, are suggestive of the full range (notice there are seven) of human experiences which seem to pose a challenge to the reality of God's love, but, which, in fact, cannot separate us from that love at all.

8:36. But the things which Paul affirms do not effect Christ's love are, nonetheless, continuing realities in his experience, as his quotation from Psalm 44:22 demonstrates. The context of Romans and the Psalm are the same—the sufferings of those who love God (cp. Rom. 8:28 and Ps. 44:17-21). Their continuous character is suggested by the metaphor θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, which is explained by ἐλογισθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.

Exposed to death, the Psalmist and Paul spend their days like a sheep awaiting slaughter, experiencing death emotionally while remaining alive physically. The verse is, for Paul, like the passage on suffering as a whole—from about verse 18—highly autobiographical. But it also involves an implicit *a fortiori* argument. If death can be thus experienced all the day long and victory still be won, the lesser experiences of verse 35 surely cannot defeat us. This argument and its conclusion are coalesced in verse 37.

8:37. Despite all the experiences of verse 35 and even that of verse 36, yet (ἀλλ') in all these things—daily death and every lesser trial (though the troubles of verse 35 have a potential for death so that verse 36 in this way covers them all)—in all these things and in every lesser trial we are superconquerors (ὑπερνικῶμεν) through Him who loved us. The prospect for the obedient suffering Christian is not merely victory but the super-victory of joint-heirship with the One who loved us, in which all things (v. 32) are given to us to share with Him by the God of love. (Τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς seems to refer to Christ, cp. v. 35, but hardly excludes a reference to God, cp. v. 39.)

This is more than triumphing over trial; this is over-triumphing. So resplendent a victory it is and so rich an expression of divine love.

8:38-39. Hence, the personal conviction of Paul (πέπεισμαι) that no possible condition (θάνατος, ζωή), no existing being (ἄγγελοι, ἄρχαι, δυνάμεις), no actual or potential experience (ἐνεστῶτα, μελλόντα), no conceivable location (ὑψωμα, βάθος), nor anything else not comprehended by the preceding (τις κτίσις ἑτέρα) can intervene between us and the divine love experienced in our union with Christ (τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ) wherein we share the earthly experiences of His sufferings (Ἰησοῦ) while under His all-controlling power and authority (τὸ Κυρίω ἡμῶν, cp. v. 34). Thus, this unfailing love of God is greater than the sum total of all adverse human experiences and is our portion in them and through them without the slightest separation until the overwhelming victory that love plans is secured in those who have responded to that love (cp. v. 28). Nothing, in fact, separates any Christian from that love; but the full realization of this belongs to those who, like Paul, love God.

CHAPTER 9

9:1-2. The apostle now turns to his concern for Israel. If his readers are to have God's love for them (of which he has been speaking in 8:31-39) in proper focus, they must see it against the backdrop of the divine program for the chosen race. This will give intelligence to the spiritual sacrifice they are to make of themselves to God (12:1-2), for they will glimpse in it the immense privilege they have by the mercies of God. The apostle begins by emphatically asserting his truthfulness when he expresses sorrow over his nation's spiritual need. The suffering to which he has just alluded (especially vv. 35-36) were, in his own case, most often initiated by the Jews. If his life stood in jeopardy, it was usually his own race which threatened it. But despite their hostility and enmity, his love for them continued—an expression of obedience to the command of Christ to love one's enemies (Luke 6:27-28, 32).

Indeed, his own deep conviction that God loved him (8:38-39) was the well-spring of his love for others, as that conviction is potentially in all believers. Hence, assured of divine love and overriding the enmity of his race toward himself, his sorrow for them was real and continuous. This he insists on, since those who knew his history might well wonder how he felt. The two-fold witness, so familiar in Jewish law, is here, too—Paul's verbal testimony, supported by conscience or consciousness, animated by the Holy Spirit (ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ). (The expression *συμμαρτυρούσης μοι* means bears witness along with me.)

9:3. Moreover, the Spirit of his Master breathes in his servant in that the apostle feels a strong inclination to somehow bear the penalty for the sin of his race in the interests of (ὕπερ) their salvation. (Εὐχόμεν suggests not an actual present wish so much as a potential toward which his concern pushed him, a tendential or voluntative imperfect.) Just as Christ had become accursed for him (Gal. 3:13; *κατάρα* is used there), so Paul sensed in himself a willingness to bear an anathema from God, even to the point of separation from Christ (ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) for his people. Thus, the love that brought Christ into separation of soul from God during the hours of darkness on the cross is here reduplicated in His follower. It is this analogy, not the idea that Paul could wish to go to hell for his race, that is appropriate. Just as God's love is commended by the death of Christ for those yet sinners (Rom. 5:9), so Paul has the same spiritual qualities toward his hostile kinsmen. The potential for self-sacrifice is there within his heart, despite it not being actually possible. (Compare, for example, David's love for Absalom and his famous lament.)

9:4-5. Such love is inspired in Paul not by what the Jews are in themselves, nor by the evils they have done, but by what they are in relationship to God. The nation's place in sonship to God (ἡ υἰοθεσία, cp. Hosea 11:1), its relationship to the shekinah (ἡ δόξα), the divine arrangement with men like David and Abraham (αἱ διαθήκαι), those Mosaic regulations so holy and just and good (ἡ νομοθεσία), the temple and the system of worship (ἡ λατρεία), the many assurances of future blessing (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι), the connection to the great patriarchs of the race (οἱ πατέρες), but, above all, the reality of the incarnation of One who was God over all, so that Christ became a Jew. All these things were spiritually-conditioned ways of viewing the nation and productive sources for a vigorous and continuous compassion and love in the apostle's heart.

So, too, if we see men as they are before God—created in His image, possessed of an eternal soul, ones valuable enough for Christ to die, we, too, can have reason for sustained compassion and spiritual love despite the sinfulness that men may exhibit. In enunciating these qualities,

however, Paul is also concerned to point out to his readers the real worth of Israel's connection with God so that they might view more humbly their present experience of privilege on the good olive tree (cp. 11:18-21) and might, therefore, estimate the mercies of God aright (12:1).

9:6-7. Yet despite his anguish over Israel's unbelief, God's word to them still has not been in vain (Οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ). This fact can be seen if it is remembered that a true Israelite and a true child of Abraham are something more than mere physical members of the nation and of Abraham's race. Just as God of old rejected Ishmael and centered His purposes in Isaac (ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα), so in contemporary Israel it is, by implication from the Old Testament story, the supernaturally born—like Isaac—who are the real seed. Hence, one must view Israel internally, not externally, to evaluate the true effect of the divine word.

9:8. That is (τοῦτ' ἐστίν) to say, those who are merely born physically to the nation (τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός) have no vital life connection with God (τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ). New birth is clearly implied in the conception of children of God. It is only those who are truly children of the Abrahamic promise who can be counted as real Abrahamic seed and, hence, real Israelites (cp. 2:28-29). By promise, Paul no doubt refers basically to the universal blessing which God had promised should come to all through Abraham; but this promise was implicitly the gospel (cp. Gal. 3:7-9). Hence, a child of that promise would be one who had come into its blessings—that is, justification of life—and, hence, could be counted a true child of Abraham (λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα) by faith.

9:9. But the Abrahamic blessing was to be channeled through Isaac (cp. ἐν Ἰσαὰκ...σπέρμα) so that the promise of Isaac's birth (Κατὰ...ἔσται τῇ Σάρρᾳ υἱός) was virtually inseparable from it. That is, it was a reaffirmation of the original promise made now specific as to its proper channel. By thinking of Isaac's birth and the original promise together, Paul manages to imply that the children of the promise, or themselves, spiritual Isaacs over against the unregenerate Ishmaels in Israel, have been substantially supernaturally born, as was Isaac himself. (Ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος is followed by a quotation about the birth. The ἐπαγγελίας links back to τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας in which the gospel is implicit.)

But there is an additional implication. In a sense, all Christians are also children of God's promise that Isaac would be born, since our very existence as Christians depended upon that birth—that is, Abraham's blessing could come to us only if Isaac was born. Hence, the title τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας is appropriate not only because of the original promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3), but also because of the promise about Isaac (Gen. 18:10, 14). We are children of both promises; but since they are in essence but one promise, we are children of promise whose origin is related to both of these promises at once.

9:10. But not only this (Οὐ μόνον δέ), the story of Rebekah giving birth to Esau and Jacob had something to offer to Paul's basic promise that God's word has not failed (cp. 9:6a). If in the birth of Isaac, as over against Ishmael, we see that God's purposes are centered in the spiritually born and that His word is made effective through the children of promise, not the children of the flesh, in Esau and Jacob we see the sovereign choice and determination which guarantees that that word shall be effective in the spiritual seed.

9:11-12. It is not that the spiritual seed respond to the word because they are basically better men than those that remain mere children of the flesh. It is rather that God has decreed that they

should, just as even before Esau and Jacob were born, before there could be a question of merit or demerit (μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν), God's own electing purpose decided that the destiny of the younger should be greater than that of the older. Paul is here concerned to show that God's elective purpose itself is distinct from human merit (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων) and is predicated not on something positive that He sees in men but upon His own initiative (ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος) which expresses His own selective intention (ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ Θεοῦ). One must not, therefore, attribute the effectiveness of God's word (9:6a) to the good fortune that some respond perhaps because they are better than those who do not, but to an original determination on God's part that thus it should be. Thus, God's purpose remains (μένει)—that is, it is the ultimate substantive explanation when it is seen as quite separate from anything man has or has not done.

Of course, the statement of verse 12 does not really deal with the salvation of Esau and Jacob, but this promise is allowed to illustrate salvation truth. In the actual history, Esau's character is directly related to his loss of blessing; but Jacob's character is not related to his acquiring it. With Jacob, God expends years of effort wrestling to bring him into His purpose; with Esau, He does not. Thus, Esau is allowed by sovereign choice to forfeit his birthright when he has personally despised it, but Jacob is deliberately given that birthright. So it is not a matter of one being more meritorious than the other, but of the outworking of an original divine purpose within whose framework Esau freely casts aside his privilege; but God sees to it that Jacob gets it. All men, therefore, are free to choose God or reject Him; but, being sinners, they reject Him. But God deals vigorously with the elect to secure their eternal blessedness.

Paul's own case might be an example of this. He is specifically stopped by God on the Damascus Road. This was a special effort on God's part to reach Paul, though any man can turn to God. Paul was especially encountered by God on the Damascus Road; and it is obvious that the Lord Jesus Christ appearing in glory to a man is an unusual way of reaching someone and is, of course, an effort to fulfill God's elective purpose on the part of Paul. God does not so appear to other unregenerate men, but this does not give unregenerate men an excuse for saying that they are unsaved because God has not appeared to them. They have sufficient opportunity and the testimony, of course, in Paul's day that was rendered in Jerusalem—the testimony of the apostles. The miracles that were wrought there were more than sufficient to bring any man an adequate testimony of God's grace to which they could have responded. But God takes the extra step in the case of Paul, just as in the case of Esau and Jacob which we are discussing. It is the extra steps that God takes in order to secure the elective purpose in Jacob—that is, the secret of the difference between the two. It is not a question of Esau being unable to respond to God, but rather of God going the extra mile with a man like Jacob.

Thus, when their history is complete, the retrospect (Malachi 1:2-3) is that Esau was hated by comparison with Jacob who was loved. It is not so much a description of God's attitude toward Esau as of His dealings with him in judgment (cp. Mal. 1:3). By contrast, sinning Israel—Jacob—is dealt with in mercy and forgiveness (the verses quoted by Paul to show the fulfillment of the purpose uttered before they were born). Hence, man's ultimate destiny can be viewed in terms of the surpassing love of God for the elect, a love which secures their eternal good however resistant they may have been. By contrast, the non-elect, like Esau, are allowed to reap the judgment they have merited, and though God's love for them is real (John 3:16), their destiny in

its stark contrast to that of the elect, has the aura of holy hatred. So, the effectiveness of God's word (9:6a) depends on what God determines to do in love in the life of rebellious sinners.

9:14-15. But are God's dealing with men, as exemplified in Jacob and Esau, unfair? In particular, can God plan their destiny (v. 12) and fulfill it by making one of them the special object of His mercy over the centuries (v. 13)? Paul's answer is emphatic that there is no injustice (ἀδικία) with God (Μὴ γένοιτο). Then quoting God's word to Moses (cp. Ex. 33:19), he affirms God's sovereign prerogative to choose the objects of His mercy and of His compassion.

9:16. Hence, divine mercy does not find its cause in any human desire for it (οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος, not of him who wills), nor in the effort to obtain it (οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος, nor of him who runs). Rather, mercy finds its source only in a merciful God (τοῦ ἐλεούντος Θεοῦ, of God who showed mercy). Mercy is not a human right, nor a divine obligation. It is given freely to undeserving men as God sees fit.

9:17-18. The history of Pharaoh, moreover, exemplifies the truth that God can, as He chooses, withhold mercy and harden the rebellious heart. In the Old Testament narrative, Pharaoh's initial rebellion is his own (cp. Ex. 5:2), and it is only after six miraculous judgments are poured out on Egypt that we read explicitly that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, as contrasted with Pharaoh's heart was hardened or stubborn (see the Hebrew of Ex. 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19). It is following this explicit statement that the words here quoted in verse 17 are uttered through Moses (Ex. 9:16). Thus, the principle is established that when man disobeys God's word (Ex. 5:2)—when he refuses the evidence for the truth of that word (Ex. 7 and 8)—God may, and has every right to, harden him and make this stubbornness permanent, using the man thus hardened for His own ends and glory. (Even Adolph Hitler, we may be sure, was so used.) Hence, verse 18, both mercy and hardening are God's prerogatives in dealing with sinful man.

9:19. The objection may, in theory, be raised, if all men serve the divine end—even rebels like Pharaoh—why should God find fault with them? Could they have done otherwise? Of course, this misses the nuance of the Old Testament story about Pharaoh, in whom divine hardening was preceded by his own rebellion.

9:20-21. But Paul is not here concerned with such nuances. Undoubtedly, he would have maintained that divine hardening is not the result of caprice or a man-like partiality on God's part, but here he is mainly concerned with divine prerogatives which may be assumed to be exercised on the basis of divine wisdom. And this is what his reply insists on—the μενοῦνγε, ὦ ἄνθρωπε (“on the contrary, oh, man”). Man has no innate right to argue with God (ἀνταποκρινόμενος), nor the creature to question the purpose (τί) of the Creator. Out of one lump of clay, two vessels may be formed. (Cp. vv. 11-13 where twins are considered.) And one may serve its Maker as an honorable utensil, and the other may serve Him as a dishonorable utensil. Households require both kinds—costly china and scrub buckets. Both are functional. Paul insists on God's right (ἐξουσίαν) as the Master Potter to make both kinds for His own end. The choice rests not in the nature of the clay—it is the same lot (ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος)—but in the sovereign prerogatives of the Potter.

9:22. The statement which begins this verse is an anacolouthon (never formally completed), but the construction with εἰ implies an apodosis with some idea like, “that is His right” (cp. ἐξουσίαν, v. 21). This continues then implicitly the thought of verses 20-21, yet the protasis

which is the only thing expressed gives new insight into how and why God's prerogatives are used in these matters. The key idea of both verses 22-23 is that of God's self-revelation (cp. the words ἐνδείξασθαι and γνωρίσαι, v. 22, and γνωρίση, v. 23). After all, creation has as one of its main functions—one of its main reasons for being—the revelation of the creator (cp. Ps. 19 and Rom. 1). Verses 22-23 state that God is revealed as well in both kinds of vessels which Paul has mentioned (v. 21). This is God's intention (θέλον). As to the vessels εἰς ἀτιμίαν, they are the means of revealing His ὀργή (cf. chapter 1) and His might (τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ). Pharaoh is undoubtedly still in mind (cp. δύναμιν in v. 17). By his rebellion, Pharaoh justified the hardening God dealt him, and this is in principle the ὀργή of chapter 1, wherein God turns men over to their sin. Thus God's wrath is revealed in the very process of hardening and His power in the multiplication of miracles which that hardness in Pharaoh provoked. Finally, Pharaoh is crushed under that power, thus showing God's capacity to deal effectively with even the most rebellious of sinners.

Yet, all of this was inseparable from the great longsuffering (ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμία) with which He put up (ἤνεγκεν) with Pharaoh's rebellion. The crushing blow could have come at once; but, instead, God rolled out in a long series the manifestations of His power, thus finding occasion to reveal, thereby, the extent of His power in Egypt. Indeed, Pharaoh's continuing stubbornness, at the same time, showed how awful was God's wrath—that a man could be hard in the face of such power and, thus, be so dreadfully well suited (κατηρτισμένα) for ultimate ruin (εἰς ἀπώλειαν).

9:23-24. By contrast, however, to the dishonorable vessels of wrath—that is, objects of His divine anger—those who are objects of divine mercy reveal a different side of God's being—τὸ πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. The glory here referred to is, undoubtedly, that of His love and mercy which are so abundant as to be a divine treasure (πλοῦτον). That the revelation made on vessels of wrath is considered first (cp. the order of mention in v. 21) suggests that God's wrath and power to deal with sin must be seen if the wealth of His mercy is to be appreciated. Mercy is not an expression of divine softness—God has wrath. Nor is it an expression of divine weakness—He has power to deal with sin. It is rather a revelation of His glory, that which is most truly magnifying to Him. Moreover, in revealing Himself in the glorious mercy He shows both to Jews and Gentiles, God has carefully prepared the objects of His mercy ahead of time—that is, ahead of His effectual call (v. 24). Then He makes them truly such objects by also calling them into a knowledge of Himself through Christ. (Notice the Greek οὐς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν—whom He also called—that is, not simply got ready, but called in addition.)

Hence, whereas man's rebellion fits him (note the impersonal κατηρτισμένα, v. 22, for ruin—εἰς ἀπώλειαν), God's sovereign working, and this only, prepares him for eternal glory (εἰς δόξαν—glory enjoyed by the object of God's mercy, but more particularly redounding to God through that object (seen here in the προητοίμασεν, of which God is the personal subject, as contrasted with the passive κατηρτισμένα, where He is not the personal subject). It is the same reticence we find exemplified in Matthew 25:41 when contrasted with Matthew 25:34. The Scriptures stop short of assigning man's eternal doom to the purpose and operation of God. Vessels of mercy are indeed the direct object of both, but the thought is different with the vessels of wrath. When the story of Pharaoh is considered in the light of Ecclesiastes 8:11-13, one sees how the very patience of God (cp. μακροθυμία, Rom. 9:22) can be, in fact, an instrument of hardening. (Compare also Rom. 2:2-5 for a similar complex of thoughts.) But if this is so, it is evident that

God's forbearance is, after all, a kindness to man and only results in his hardening when he responds to it with indifference over a period of time. In such a case, the process of time and the accumulation of habitual ways of thinking and feeling are the real hardening agents. Thus, the hardening process is built into life and experience. (It has been said, for example, that 75% of those saved are saved before age 14.) And so it is man, not God who bears the responsibility for it in the ultimate sense. Vessels of wrath are κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν in a perfectly understandable way, as God bears with them with much longsuffering. But His direct intervention prevents this in pure grace in the lives of those who become vessels of mercy. The decision to intervene with some, but not all, is a sovereign prerogative (vv 18-21) rooted, no doubt, in infinite wisdom, but no less undeserved on our part and beyond the right of any man to claim.

(Here I have a note that is somewhat grammatical. The time relationship between ἤνεγκεν and κατηρτισμένα is questionable. God may indeed bear them after they are so fitted. But if κατηρτισμένα is attributive, we might think of the attribute as realized during the process of ἤνεγκεν; so then we might have something like this: "God, enduring with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath which stand fitted for destruction by that very process."

9:25-26. The fall of Gentiles as the object of divine mercy (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἔθνῶν, v. 24) elicits from Paul a citation of supporting Scripture. The passages quoted (v. 25 quotes Hosea 2:23, 26; Hosea 1:10) in their original setting refer to the restoration of Israel, but are used by Paul to affirm a principle. The principle is that God can accept those whom He has previously rejected, which is precisely what He has done in creating a predominately Gentile Church, making its Gentile members His people—objects of His special love (ἡγαπημένην) by new birth (υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος).

9:27-29. But Paul has also spoken of Jewish objects of mercy (οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων, v. 24). This is now also affirmed from Old Testament Scripture with special emphasis on the smallness of the numbers involved. The existence of a remnant within unbelieving Israel was implied already but not directly stated in verses 6-13—that is, that this is a remnant only is not explicit, though the verses make clear God has children of promise in the nation. The passages quoted (vv. 27-28) are from Isaiah 10:22-23 and (v. 29) from Isaiah 1:9. Both are most readily taken of God's temporal physical judgments upon Israel; particularly those of the great tribulation (v. 29), in the form Paul quotes it, recalls Matthew 24:21-22. The coming short work of His judgment alone preserves the nation from total extinction. But once again the apostle is laying down a principle—in this case, one operative mostly in the coming tribulation, but operative also on a spiritual level through the present age. So Isaiah declares the fewness of the saved (v. 27), and he relates this to God's short work (v. 28) on the earth. But Paul's ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς could mean on the land—that is, Israel.

Here there is a contrast between the LXX and the Hebrew. That is, God had greatly abbreviated His dealings with Israel, and has done so justifiably (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) by saving only a few. In contrast to the short work in which He has saved a few, He has done a long work—an extended one among the Gentiles—in saving many.

The sense of the Hebrew of Isaiah 10:23, which seems to stress destruction, fits this latter application of the quotation in verse 28 when that is understood spiritually. Spiritual destruction is the fate of Israel. This is God's short work, so that only a few survive with spiritual life. (See

what follows in the discussion of verse 29.) Hence, as in the tribulation, so now, only a few are saved in a strictly spiritual sense.

In the same way, verse 29, which has obvious reference to physical destruction, takes on a spiritual significance in the hands of Paul. The punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah was linked conceptually with eternal judgment (cp. Jude 7), so it is reasonable to see in their utter ruin a picture of spiritual death. Spiritual death, and consequent eternal fire (again cp. Jude 7) would have been the total lot of Israel were it not for the seed (σπέρμα, cp. v. 8) God had left them—that is, the small remnant of the saved.

9:30. Taking the two principles together—one, the rejected Gentiles are now God’s people and His sons; two, only a bare remnant of Israel is saved—what can be said by way of explaining so strange a state of affairs (at least strange from the standpoint of the Jew—τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν, “what shall we say?”) is that (οὐτι taken here as declarative) the Gentiles have found an unsought righteousness, but one that is based on faith.

9:31-32a. By contrast, however (δέ is mildly inversive – “Inversative” is not a standard term.), Israel has not found the righteousness it sought because it sought it on the wrong principle—that is, by law works and not by faith. Implicit in this contrast is the suggestion that it is better to seek no righteousness than to seek righteousness in a self-righteous way. The principle is illustrated in the fact that the publicans and sinners responded to Jesus while the Pharisees and religious people did not. To them, as here to Israel (vv. 32b and 33), He was a stumbling stone and rock of offense. In the phrase εἰς νόμον δικαιοσύνης οὐκ ἔφθασε there is a play on words. When Israel pursued the law of righteousness (διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης), it was the Mosaic law they pursued. To this they have not attained (οὐκ ἔφθασε), since justification is impossible under the Mosaic law—that is, no one can attain its high standards. By yet in another sense, Israel had not attained righteousness law because they had missed the law of faith. (Here cp. 3:27-28.) It is a divine law—that is, it is a divine principle—that men are constituted righteous only by faith.

9:32b-33. This, of course, was what made Christ a stumbling stone to Israel (cp. Isa. 8:14). Coming with an offer of righteousness by faith, the religious spirit of Israel was offended because it was fixed on a works righteousness and, thus, the nation stumbled. (Compare the older brother of Luke 15 whose pride is that of religious Israel while the prodigal can be seen to reflect repentant Gentiles. This is one way, at least, of taking the story.) Right in Israel’s path, in the Person of Christ, lay the righteousness the nation sought (cp. 10:4). But not perceiving that their goal—that is, righteousness, which is the τέλος...νόμου (goal of the law, cp. 10:4)—is reached in Christ, He became not their Savior, but their stone of offense. Thus, they stumbled (cp. λίθον προσκόμματος), and He, thus, became an object of revulsion (πέτραν σκανδάλου). (The idea of revulsion is appropriate and is also the suggestion of a trap; compare the definitions in Arndt and Gingrich.)

This, of course, is Israel’s great shame, but every believer escapes shame (οὐ κατασχυνθήσεται, cp. Isa. 28:16). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew verb seems to connote “to hurriedly strike away.” The idea, therefore, can encompass the chagrin and confusion which Christ causes Israel and every unbeliever; but the thought is very sweeping so that both temporal and eternal shame are included. Paul will later use the verse to encourage confession (10:11). The future tense is both a prediction and a command. No ultimate shame accrues to the believer for having believed,

and, hence, he should feel no shame now. A man who trips is properly chagrined, but the believer is not properly so.

CHAPTER 10

10:1. But the stern statement about Israel's condition which Paul has just made (9:30-33) does not reflect his real desire for them. His real desire, as well as his prayer for Israel, is that they might escape (εἰς σωτηρίαν) the fallen condition in which they now are found (9:32b-33a). As the whole argument of Romans 9 has made clear, the hardened and, hence, fallen state of Israel is an expression of divine wrath (note well 9:22), so that the salvation Paul speaks of here is throughout Romans more than regeneration. It is deliverance from being under God's wrath (cp. 1:18; 5:9-10).

10:2. This desire for their salvation finds a special incentive (γὰρ) in the zeal that Israel has for God, ignorant thought that zeal is.

10:3. For (γὰρ) Israel's zeal is nothing else than a vigorous pursuit (ζητοῦντες equals searching) of a meritorious personal (ιδίαν) righteousness, a pursuit based in ignorance (ἄγνοοῦντες) of the true divine righteousness and resulting in a refusal to submit to that righteousness (οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν). The verse intends a contrast between τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην and τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ—these two phrases—and τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην. The latter is man's own inadequate personal merit, while the former is the perfect imputed righteousness which comes from and belongs to God Himself.

10:4. The pursuit Paul has just described is needless, however, for (γὰρ) Christ personally is the goal (Τέλος) which men strive to reach under law—namely, righteousness. That is, what man sought under law they actually find in the person of Christ. The phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην is about equal to: “as regards righteousness”; that is, as regards righteousness, the law's objective (Τέλος...νόμου) is achieved in the Savior. Τέλος probably also implies the actual end of the law as an operative principle in this regard (cp. Galatians). The schoolmaster no longer has a viable function now that faith has come.

10:5. Indeed, the law's objective is, so Paul now implies, is out of man's reach when sought by means of the law. The righteousness which it provides is available only after obedience to it (ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ implies antecedence to ζήσεται). To be observed is the fact that Paul refers to the law's righteousness as being described in a promise of living (ζήσεται); for in Romans, righteousness and life are spiritual twins, but the former is usually presupposed by the latter. That is, life is predicated on righteousness (cp. Rom. 5:12-21). It is the righteous man who *lives* by faith (Rom. 1:17). Hence, because one can only be righteous under the law when one has done (ποιήσας) these things, one can only live when one has done them. Moses, therefore, in writing of (γράφει) the law's righteousness can express this in terms of living, since one cannot do the latter without having the former. The latent presupposition is, then, that to experience eternal life, one needs to be accounted righteous.

10:6-7. But what was far off—unattainable under the law—is near at hand in the message of faith. The righteousness of faith speaks an entirely different language than does legal righteousness. The language that faith talks advises man that he is not to say in his heart that the experience of life and/or righteousness is way up in heaven, since Christ has already come down to bring it within man's reach. Neither is he to say that it is way down under the earth (that is, εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον equals Hades), since Christ has already risen and, thus, provided the basis upon which

life and/or righteousness may be had (cp. 4:25). (Notice that the words here are consciously modeled on Deut. 30:11-14, with the last words of 30:14 consciously omitted.)

In the reference to Christ coming down from heaven, Paul, no doubt, thinks of Him as ascended and, thus, Lord; and this corresponds to the confession of verse 9. The reference to resurrection corresponds to the believing in verse 9. If this is the case, we should link the thought of salvation—which equals living (cp. vv. 5, 9)—with the question which is not to be asked, “Who shall descend into the deep?” (Cp. 4:25.) Justification is predicated on Christ’s death and resurrection; living upon His ascension. Because of which (the ascension), the Holy Spirit joins us to His risen life (the Spirit not being given prior to His glorification) so that living, in the Pauline sense at least (cp. 6:4), was not previously possible as an experience of union with Him.

For Paul, the experience of eternal life is always inseparable from the life we have in the Spirit as those joined with Christ, quickened with Christ, raised up with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When we conceive of eternal life experienced in this way, it could not be experienced in this fashion until Christ had ascended; since it is only subsequent to the ascension that the Spirit comes. (This is, of course, a somewhat different perspective than the Johannean perspective.)

But to bring Christ down from above naturally also implies an unfinished work. But Christ’s ascension, which makes us think of Him as Lord, is, in fact, the very symbol of the completeness of that work. That is why we should not say, “Who will bring Him down from above?” as though the work were not finished. His work is finished! (Cp. Heb. 1:3; 10:12.)

10:8. Since, then, no fault can be found in the divine provision through Christ, there is nothing He must still do—either by coming down or by rising. The questions of verses 7 and 8 are inappropriate and forbidden by the righteousness of faith. But what is appropriate to say? (Ἄλλα τί λέγει;) Paul now gives what the righteousness of faith says in a positive way. (Verses 6 and 7 were negative.) The word that he speaks is near to him (the law offered a far-off promise)—so near, in fact, as to be a man’s mouth and heart. Hence, man must do something with that word in both mouth and heart. For the word to be near in mouth and heart, of course, implies it has been preached (κηρύσσομεν). the message of faith (τὸ ρῆμα τῆς πίστεως) which Paul preaches tells what man must do with this word which is so near him and, hence (v. 9), answers the ἄλλα τί λέγει as well as sums up Paul’s message.

10:9. The language of this verse is precisely what Israel needs to hear as being under divine wrath in a special way, but it is also what all men under that wrath need to hear. They can be saved from that wrath if able to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus while believing inwardly in the reality of His resurrection.

10:10. Paul now makes clear that it is the action of the heart that brings justification, while it is the action of the mouth that results in salvation. To be kept in mind is 1:18 where God’s wrath is directed against the ἀδικίαν...κατεχόντων. The verb κατέχω here signifies, “to suppress”; and the implication is that until man is both righteous and ceases to suppress the truth, God will have grounds for wrath. We need hardly to say that Israel very especially sought to suppress the truth. (Compare 1 Thess. 2:15-16, and the reference to wrath there in connection with this suppression.) But faith in the heart brings righteousness to replace unrighteousness, an immediate gift in contrast to the far-off righteousness of the law. And confession with the mouth brings an end to the suppression of the truth and makes possible an immediate experience of life—

that is, σωτηριαν (v. 10)—in contrast again to the far-off promise of the law. Hence, the near word of Paul’s gospel needs to be only to be acted on with heart and mouth in order to issue in a present vital experience of living. (Compare ζήσεται in verse 5.) This is what is meant when Paul declares that ὁ δεδικαιωμένος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται; out of the faith which makes him a righteous man springs the experience of life, free from God’s wrath which may begin as soon as confession begins.

10:11. There is no reason why confession should not be made, because (γάρ) the Scriptures declare that the believer shall not be ashamed. Οὐ κατασχυνθήσεται is perhaps primarily imperitival in force; i.e., the believer ought not be ashamed, though an element of assertion is perhaps present, as well. That is, the believer shall not be confounded. The Hebrew original has *yachish*. This seems to suggest, “to hasten distractedly away (BDB, p. 301). An imperitival sense fits well in the context of Isaiah 28. There in Isaiah 28, the believer is not to take refuge in the false hopes of the unbelieving nation (Isa. 28:15), but to trust in God’s true cornerstone—that is, in Christ—without chagrin or fear. The false refuges of the nation will be swept away in judgment (Isa. 28:17). The unashamed believer, it is applied, will alone survive—be saved—from this coming wrath. Paul, here, is picking up the quotation of Isaiah 28:16 which he had used earlier (9:33), just prior to beginning this discussion of Israel’s salvation. The willingness of the nation and of any man to be unashamed of faith in Christ is the key to the salvation Paul has in mind. If confession is made, salvation can follow (cp. v. 10).

10:12. The command not to be ashamed of one’s faith, as well as the implied affirmation that no shame will come, is founded in turn (γάρ) upon the lordship of the One being confessed. It is the Lord Jesus who is confessed (v. 9), and if He is truly Lord, He is Lord universally, Hence, without distinction (διαστολή), Jew or Gentile who may believe in Him may invoke (ἐπικαλουμένους) His aid and can be assured that this will be lavishly (πλουτῶν) granted. The phrase τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτοῦ utilizes the verb with legal overtones (cp. Acts 25:11); and just as a Roman citizen might appeal over the head of every subordinate judge, so the believer is one who appeals higher even than Caesar—to Him who is Lord over all—and, thus, sets his case before the tribunal of heaven. Moreover, the same Greek phrase, οἱ καλούμενοι, became a way of identifying the believer who linked himself with the Christian testimony (cp. Acts 9:14, 21; 1 Cor. 1:2). Hence, the idea involved in τοὺς ἐπὶ καλουμένους αὐτοῦ is both that of appealing to God for aid and, in the context of general Christian usage, being one who is publicly known for doing so. In this way, the concept of confession is inseparable from this particular expression and is implicit in it. Paul is arguing that shame is inappropriate to the believer (v. 11), since the one who calls on the Lord—that is, who both confesses and appeals to Him—is always the object of His rich provision.

10:13. In fact, such a one would be saved—that is, he would be delivered from divine wrath to live in newness of life, freedom from the embarrassment of the dominion of sin. (Once again, σωτηρία = ζήσεται. In this context, compare the notes in verse 10.) The quotation is from Joel 2:32 and belongs in the first instance to the final day of wrath from which the remnant will be rescued as they call on God for help. By extension of principle, Paul applies it to the present and to the wrath which man is under here and now. From such wrath, the Christian who publicly makes the name of the Lord his source of help will find that help and will be, by it, freed from the bondage in which the unrighteous live life to their destruction.

With this quotation, then, Paul climaxes his discussion of God's wrath. Israel's salvation must consist in belief and confession of Christ, by way of contrast with their own pursuit of acceptance before God by means of the law (cp. 10:2-3). Christ is the true realization of the law's aim (10:4), and salvation is as near to them as their mouth and heart (10:5-10), since the universal lordship banishes shame for the one who invokes it (10:11-13) and secures the salvation. Hence, no believer may fear disastrous failure before men if he truly takes a stand for Christ and relies on His aid by calling on Him for this.

In connection with the presentation of the subjects of righteousness and salvation in the book of Romans, we've distinguished these consistently throughout the exposition. Righteousness refers to an experience of justification by faith and is what we usually refer to as getting saved. Salvation in the book of Romans refers to the experience of eternal life which springs out of justification, so that the justification of Romans is a justification of life. It is a justification that leads to an experience of life. So when Paul uses the term "saved" in the book of Romans, he is thinking of the new life which we live; and the thing from which we are saved is the wrath of God under which men stand according to Romans chapter 1—that is, men are turned over to the bondage of sin. But by virtue of our union with the life of Christ, we can be saved from that wrath—we can be saved from the bondage to sin—in that we can now live a new life, free from that bondage.

Now, in connection with Israel, Paul has pointed out in Romans 9 that Israel has become a vessel of wrath. Israel has fallen, therefore, under the wrath of God in a very special way; and the hardening of God is upon them in that wrath. Romans 10 is discussing how Israel may be saved from that wrath, how they can cease to be an object of the divine anger and can once again experience the divine favor. Israel, therefore, must, of course, receive justification. This is done by belief in the heart; for with the heart man believes unto righteousness. But Israel must do more than this. No man can experience the new life in Christ who refuses to acknowledge the source of that life publicly and who does not invoke the name of the Lord as his consistent resource. So what Paul had in mind is that the man not only believes in his heart, but, in order to live this life, he steps out and openly confesses the Lord Jesus. He makes the Lord Jesus the One upon whom he calls. Here I sense that the idea of confession and calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus (as the notes will indicate) are not very different from each other and are an integral part of the same process. The Christian man is the man who acknowledges Christ and invokes His aid, and what is guaranteed here is that the man who does that will not be ashamed—that is to say, he will really experience this salvation, this deliverance from wrath, this new life, which will evidence the reality of the lordship of Christ and the living power of Christ in his own personal experience.

10:14-15. A new subject begins here. Paul has expressed his deep desire for Israel's salvation (10:1) and has outlined the message of that salvation in contrast to the law (10:2-13). In particular, he has specified the word of faith which he preached (10:8-9—vv. 10-13 elaborate v. 9). Now he wishes to stress the importance of preaching in the light of Israel's need and over against their rejection of the preached message (10:14-21). Paul who so earnestly desired their salvation (10:1) is himself a messenger and herald of that salvation, and, as a preacher, his work is essential to the fulfillment of his desire for them. (We might note that the prayer warrior is often the instrument God uses to reach those for whom he prays—cp. Matt. 9:37-10:7.) For, in fact, to call on the Lord's name for salvation (salvation from wrath) requires first a faith that has brought justification (cp. 10:10). But such faith can only come when one has heard of Christ

(cp. 10:17); and for this, a preacher is essential. But preachers will not preach unless God sends them. Here the apostle thinks in terms of Isaiah 52:7 and the ancient way of sending a vital message. The runner who carried this message was always simply the agent of the sender, using his feet to go where he was sent to go. (Of course, Paul does not here consider the situation of a runner who runs unsent—for example, a preacher who is not called to preach.) Hence, the sending of God is assumed to be the vital initiative behind the preacher and, hence, also, behind the salvation of men. God, therefore, is responsible for such a ministry as Paul engages in.

Though a ministry designed by God for Israel's salvation and essential to it, is a ministry Israel nevertheless rejects (cp. 10:21). God is, through Paul and others, stretching forth His hands to a disobedient people seeking to save them. The statement quoted by the apostle from Isaiah 52:7 is set in the context of the eschatological salvation of Israel. The day of her bondage and oppression (particularly the Great Tribulation) is over in this passage from Isaiah. The prophet sees runners coming across the mountains toward the walls of Zion (cp. Isa. 52:1-10) to inform the city that peace and salvation are hers because her God reigns worldwide. It is a report of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth that they bring, as perhaps coming from every point on the compass. And though their feet are dirty, so lovely and thrilling is their message that their dirty feet are actually beautiful as they cross the mountains on their way to the walls of Jerusalem.

(Here I want to point out that Isaiah uses the singular and Paul the plural. Thus, we see, technically, in Isaiah, one runner; and, in Paul—"how beautiful are the feet of *them* that preach the gospel of peace," a plurality is in view. But I think the singular in Isaiah is rightly understood in a collective and representative sense. The Hebrew here uses the participle with no article and, hence, is descriptive and characterizing, rather than particularizing—at least in my opinion.)

The structure of Isaiah 52:7, in the Hebrew, is carefully balanced so that peace and salvation are the two things published as glad tidings. The "good" represented in Hebrew by *tob* ("In Hebrew, *tov / tob* [טוב] means 'good'")—of an equal to τὰ ἀγαθὰ in the Greek—is clearly related by this parallelism to salvation. This obviously fits the double thrust of the Pauline message (cp. 10:9-10). The peace Paul proclaims is that which comes from justification (cp. Rom. 5:1), while the "good things" he declares are those of salvation from God's wrath to the experience of life by the Spirit (cp. Rom. 8). The former is attained by faith in the heart; the latter by calling on the name of the Lord which includes confession. (Compare the idea of lordship in Romans 10, universal in scope, with the phrase "thy God reigneth" in Isa. 52:7. As Lord, Jesus even now reigns—cp. 1 Cor. 15:25 with Psalm 110:1. Thus, salvation, in the sense it has in Romans, is possible now through His lordship as also eschatologically it will be for Israel when He reigns on earth.) As Israel in a coming day will emerge from divine wrath experienced in the tribulation period to enjoy peace and the good things of the salvation which brings that wrath to an end, so any man today can experience these things on the spiritual level that Paul has expounded them in the book of Romans. But if and when Israel collectively responds to the Pauline message, then not only will the spiritual values be hers—justification and salvation from divine anger—but the kingdom experience envisioned by Isaiah will begin. But for now, as Paul will go on to explain, Israel as a whole spurns the message, so that only the spiritual effects discussed in Romans are being experienced—though the message the nation as a whole will ultimately believe is precisely what Paul now preaches. So in this message lies ultimately the answer to Paul's prayer (10:1), and the preaching of it is indispensable to that answer.

10:16. Yet, tragically, this preaching which is so necessary does not meet with complete success. (The οὐ πάντες leaves room for the remnant described in chapter 11.) But Israel's failure to believe was foreseen long ago by the prophet Isaiah who lamented their unreceptiveness in the words Paul quotes. The quotation begins the Old Testament's most famous passage about the rejection of Christ.

10:17. Now Isaiah's words make clear what Paul has been insisting on—namely, the necessity of the preached message as a prelude to faith. Faith arises from what is heard (ἐξ ἀκοῆς, cp. τῇ ἀκοῇ in the quotation), and this hearing comes through (διὰ) the preached word of God. So the report of which Isaiah speaks is essential.

10:18. But as Isaiah's words also show, Israel's problem does not lie in the lack of such a report. It is not, Paul insists, that the report has not reached them. In fact, it has gone out on a universal scale. The quotation is drawn from Psalm 19 where the words are used of the witness of creation. Here Paul implies that the gospel now has the same universal scope as the testimony of nature.

10:19. So, Paul repeats himself, it cannot be said that Israel has not known. Here the shift to ἔγνω from the ἠκούσαν of verse 18 suggests a slight shift of emphasis. Not only has the gospel message been proclaimed world-wide so that Israel has had opportunity to hear (10:18), but also it has been accepted all over the world among Gentiles (10:19-20) so that Israel has had direct exposure to its power and influence around about them. In this sense they *know* because the gospel has become a viable option and a tangible reality to which they have been exposed. What Paul has in mind, as the quotation from Deuteronomy 32:31 (cp. with Romans 11:11-14) shows is that the acceptance of the gospel by the Gentile world has as its aim to stir Israel to a jealous concern for the salvation they are spurning. It is to arouse their ire (παροργίζω) that they are being passed by in this superlative experience with the intended result that they should seek it. In short, it is to alter that estimation of Messiah which has provoked Isaiah's lament quoted in verse 16, an estimation in which they found Him unattractive (cp., especially, Isaiah 53:2-3). But now that the Gentiles had found Him attractive, it was the aim of God that the Jews might be stirred to a jealous awareness of the excellence of Him whom they had spurned. In such a spirit, we might imagine them saying (an imaginary quote here), "That is our Savior the Gentiles find so wonderful; that is our salvation they so joyfully experience; and we want Him and it for ourselves, as well."

10:20. Hence, in the words of Isaiah 65:1, the Gentile world, which was neither seeking Israel's God or asking after His promised Savior, have found the One they were not looking for—the intention being that Israel, which was seeking God and His Messiah, might become aware of what they have missed.

10:21. But, as Isaiah's words had gone on to point out (Isa. 65:2) this divine effort to reach them through the grace extended to the Gentiles failed, and God is seen as standing so to speak with open and outstretched, but empty, arms. The people whom He tried to reach, not only by the preached message, but also by His provocative kindness to the Gentiles, remain a disobedient (ἀπειθοῦντα—perhaps also disbelieving) and back-talking (ἀντιλέγοντα, meaning "to speak against") people. In particular, it was the preached message they disobeyed, and as Paul's experience abundantly confirmed, it was especially God at work among the Gentiles which provoked their verbal and overt hostility. The message provoked the idea expressed in ἀπειθοῦντα; the acceptance by the Gentiles provoked their ἀντιλέγοντα (and here compare

ἀντιλέγοντα with the use of this verb in Acts 13:45; cp., also, Acts 28:19, 21). Hence the two verbs, descriptive of Israel's response to God's salvation, correspond roughly to the two aspects of the divine effort to reach them. These two aspects are introduced by the parallel phrases, ἄλλα λέγω, in verses 18 and 19. The first aspect brings Israel a hearing of the gospel which they disobey/disbelieve (ἀπειθοῦντα), while the second aspect gives them a demonstration of its power and acceptability and against which they vigorously speak (ἀντιλέγοντα). For it was especially this last aspect which transformed the Jews into the vocal opponents of the gospel they became; so that the jealousy and anger prophesied by Moses (10:19) was not such as led them to repentance, but rather to further estrangement from the God who was thereby stretching out His hands to them.

CHAPTER 11

11:1-2a. But the obduracy of Israel, described in climax by 10:21, raises the question whether this signifies that God has rejected His ancient people; for ultimately it is God who grants repentance unto life (cp. Acts 11:18), and it is God who opens hearts (cp. Acts 16:14). If, therefore, Israel lacks these things, has God indeed cast them away? Paul's answer is emphatically negative (μὴ γένοιτο). In fact, he himself as a genuine member of that race is part of the proof that God has not cast away the nation He elected before time began. (Οὐ προέγνων is the idea here.)

11:2b. The Old Testament testimony to Elijah's experience relative to God's fidelity to the nation is now evoked. Frustrated and discouraged, Elijah had actually become Israel's accuser in prayer to God. He makes intercession to God *against* Israel.

11:3. His words of accusation against the nation were quite true. They had killed the prophets and disrupted the worship of the Lord, but his self-pitying claim to be the only one left for God, and he about to be killed, reflected adversely on God's faithfulness to the covenant relationship He had with Israel.

11:4. God's reply does not deny Israel's sin, but it does affirm His own loyal love to them. They were not cast away (cp. ἀπωσάτο in vv 1, 2), even in Elijah's day, because God had reserved for Himself a remnant; and by doing so, He signified His continuing fidelity to that nation. As long as there were seven thousand who were His, the nation could not perish under divine judgment as, in fact, Elijah's prayer implied that they deserved to do. So it was not a nation totally out of relationship to Him, however small the remnant might be.

11:5. In the same way, in Paul's own day, God had reserved a similar remnant, of which Paul was a part (v 1b). Indeed, the phrase ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ is prophetically true and has been applicable whenever it has been read during the 1900 plus years that followed Paul's own time. Thus, the faithfulness of God to Israel has been perpetually in evidence in accordance with an election of grace.

11:6. This last point is significant since the remnant is not preserved, because it is the worthy element of a rebellious race. Paul, who is part of it, could say this least of all. Rather, the remnant existed in its relationship to God on the grounds of a justifying grace that excluded works. To introduce works was to destroy the character of grace, just as works excluded grace, for the same reason that works are not meritorious if the reward is given by grace. On such grounds, work ceases to be a real work. The point of these remarks is to establish grace as the exclusive footing on which the believing remnant, Paul included, stood before God. That they could claim merit, just as unbelieving Israel sought to do, must be utterly ruled out. By so much, of course, the greatness of God's faithfulness to Israel appears for the remnant which proves that faithfulness exists as such only because of God's gracious action toward them, not because of any work they had done to call forth such faithfulness.

11:7. How then shall one summarize Israel's current state (τι οὖν)? The conclusion of the apostle is that Israel as a whole has missed her most prized object—namely, righteousness (cp. 9:31; 10:3); and only the elect remnant has acquired it—of course, by faith. But the majority have been hardened. (Cp. the discussion of God's hardening activity in 9:14-24.)

11:8. Hence, as Isaiah foresaw of old (Isa. 29:10), Israel has been overtaken by a drunken stupor. (For the connotation of *drunken*, cp. Isa. 29:9-10; Ps. 60:3; [LXX 59:3].) This stupor has rendered them spiritually insensitive in eyes and ears.

11:9. Another way of describing the same judgment is to see Israel's table as having become its trap. David's words are those quoted, but the psalm depicts the experience of Messiah. In particular is this so in the words immediately preceding the cursing of Israel's table; for there in Psa. 69:20-21, the Savior's experience in the crucifixion is described. His deep heartbrokenness and inner sickness (cp. the Hebrew) at the rejection of the nation and at their utter lack of sympathy and deep compassion (Psa. 69:20) to which their response is but gall and vinegar (Psa. 69:21). (The literal giving of wine mixed with gall as an anesthetic and a sour wine equal vinegar as a thirst-quencher were both ostensible acts of mercy, but pitifully inadequate—one coming at the beginning and the other at the end of the actual crucifixion—so that the whole experience is bounded by man's perfunctory acts of inadequate trifling kindness.) In the light of Israel's dreadfully uncompassionate response to Christ, their table is promptly cursed in the psalm (69:22). Hence, the curse, as quoted by Paul, is most appropriate against the background of Israel's rejection of Christ and His righteousness and is a way of saying that the very things designed for their provision and nourishment (the table most naturally implying food and supplies, whether conceived literally or spiritually) will or have become their snare. That is, all that Israel was provided with by God now works to their detriment and ruin. For example, the Law itself, designed to prepare them for Christ and the righteousness of faith, becomes to them a supposed means of salvation and, hence, a trap keeping them from obtaining that which they sought (cp. v 7). Indeed, all the favors of God with which their table was supplied ensnared them in the arrogance and self-righteousness and refractoriness which have been their ruin. (So, by way of principle, the highly blessed soul which responds feebly to its Savior—cp. Psa. 69:20-21—will find those very blessings a trap that harden and blind it and lead it on to ruin.) Like a nation overindulging at a lavish table, Israel has fallen prey to a spiritual stupefaction (cp. v 8) by which their rejection of Christ is repaid (καὶ εἰς ἀνταπόδομα αὐτοῖς).

11:10. The ensnarement of their table leads on in the words of the psalm to loss of spiritual vision (cp., also, the saying in v 8) and to the miseries under which through history since Paul's day their back has been made to bend. (The Septuagint quoted here differs verbally from the Hebrew, but the intent of both is much the same. The shaking loins in the Hebrew suggest fear and anxiety at either actual or potential calamities, while the bent-down back suggests the aspect of one overwhelmed by calamities or by the expectation of them.) Hence, by the two-fold witness of the Old Testament Scriptures—Isaiah and Psalms (that is, Isaiah and David)—Paul has described the judgment under which the majority of the nation has fallen.

11:11. But the judgment of Israel just described (vv 7-10) raises the obvious question of whether this is now the end for that nation in the purposes of God. To this Paul returns an emphatically negative answer. Quite the contrary (Ἀλλὰ); all is being used by God to bring salvation to the Gentiles. But this very thing signifies His continued desire for them, since He seeks thereby to provoke Israel to jealousy. That is, He seeks to arouse Israel to desire that same salvation for themselves. Hence, His love for them continues.

11:12. Now (δε) if His efforts to reach a fallen nation have such great effects of blessing, how much greater would be the effects flowing from actually reaching them? If Israel's fall can enrich the world, if their diminution (ἥττημα) in the blessing of God can enrich Gentiles, how

much more magnificent, Paul argues, would be the result of their once again becoming full of divine favor (μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν)?

11:13-14. Paul wishes the Gentiles to take cognizance of all this. (Note the emphatic ὑμῖν in the phrase ὑμῖν γὰρ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.) And this somewhat peremptory spirit leads Paul to add, somewhat parenthetically, that since he is, in fact, a Gentiles' apostle (notice again the emphatic ἔθνῶν), he wishes to make much of his service in order to further the divine program and stir at least some of his own race to jealousy and salvation. The verb δοξάζω here perhaps denotes a habitual practice, suggesting the apostle likes to flaunt, in a good sense, his ministry (τὴν διακονίαν) to the Gentile world, hoping thereby to promote the divine program of arousing the fallen nation to jealousy. (Cp. the use of παραζηλώω both here and in v 11.) He seems conscious, however, that only a partial, not a total effect, will result. That is, only some (τινάς) will be saved (cp. vv 5, 25). Yet even this is more than worth the effort to make much of his Gentile service, and even his many sufferings are a part of this general intention, arising as they did principally from his Gentile ministry. His point here is that he will not hesitate to speak to his Gentile audience in the tones proper to a Gentiles' apostle since it is his basic practice to magnify that office for the salvation of at least some of those of his own flesh.

11:15. What he has to say to the Gentiles is now expressed. They must realize that if Israel's casting away means reconciliation for the world, their being received again into God's favor will issue in the even more abundant blessing of life from the dead. By καταλλαγή Paul means basically σωτηρία (cp. v 11). The same two concepts appear together in 5:9-11, but perhaps the former is more precisely the cessation of enmity with God effective by justification, while the latter is the experience that flows from that—that is, victorious living, free from divine wrath. The statement about reconciliation does not suggest a form universalism, rather that the world as a whole, in contrast simply to a single nation, has now become the object of God's reconciling activity. In light of Romans 10:10-11, καταλλαγή is what is effected in the relationship of believers to God, not, as in 2 Cor. 5:19, what is done by the cross regardless of man's response. (For a similar use of *world* to Paul's here, cp. John 6:33.) By ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν Paul has in mind not only the spiritual resurrection of Israel itself (cp. Ezek. 37), but also that of the entire creation. In other words, his phrase is virtually equivalent to the παλιγγενεσία referred to in Matt. 19:28. That is, Paul has in mind the resurrection of the entire world order, both the natural world (cp. Rom. 8:19-21), as well as the social, economic, and political world. Out of the death unto which the present order lies, when Israel is received back into favor, a new age will be born and its birth will be a species of resurrection; so great then will be the universal benefaction of Israel's resurrection. (This, of course, is the kingdom of God; and we might say it is, in fact, the first resurrection with all that this entails. So I'm taking the phrase ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν as a way of referring to the age to come, which is the resurrection age with all of the resurrection of the world order, as well as of men, that that implies.)

11:16. Hence, one ought to look at the present state of affairs as a sort of first fruits or root of what is to come in the holy purposes of God. The blessing which God now gives so richly to the Gentile world as a result of Israel's fall is a foregleam of the unspeakably greater blessings toward which it points—that is, the life from the dead over against the reconciliation described in v 15. The present world blessing is like the first cake of bread baked from a great lump whose character that first cake reveals. (For the background of this particular image, see Num. 15:20-21.) It is also like a root from which one may look to grow the branches which are the end

product. From every point of view, then, the present situation manifests the holy work of God. Israel has not become by its tragedy a profane thing no longer related to the divine purposes. Rather, the activity of God in connection with her fall bears the marks of the work of His holiness which is a foreshadowing of His ultimate holy design, not merely for Israel but for all mankind.

11:17. The terms root and branches that Paul has just used (v 16) become a springboard for a new direction of thought. Whereas in v 16 the term κλάδοι seems to signify the ultimate fruitfulness of Israel which will spring from the root (ρίζα) of His present dealings with them, in the new image, beginning in this verse, the κλάδοι are Israel itself, and the ρίζα are very likely the fathers from whom Israel had sprung (cp. v 28). The new image will serve as a reminder of God's grace to the Gentile during the time of Israel's fall and will be used to warn them of the danger of losing their present privileges. The *you* (συ) of this verse, and throughout the metaphor, is a collective way of addressing the Gentiles as a whole and has no reference to the destiny of individual Gentiles. What is before Paul's mind is the special opportunity afforded to Gentile humanity by the fall of Israel.

Some of the Jewish branches, Paul affirms, have been broken off. (The plural is used here to recall the truth stated earlier in the chapter that God has not wholly cast away His people, but has preserved for Himself a remnant according to the election of grace—11:1-2, 5-6. But it is to be noted that in referring to Gentile privilege here and in the following verses, no plurals occur.) The Jewish branches that are broken off obviously refer to the portion of Israel which has lost special standing before God. (The broken branches clearly do not refer to formerly regenerate Israelites who have lost their personal salvation. They obviously refer to Israelites who lost their special place and privilege because they never were saved at all. In like manner, the engrafted Gentiles may be seen collectively as the Gentile world which has been made the focus of God's program in salvation and thus partakes of the root and fatness of the good olive tree. That is, the Gentile world has now tasted the salvation blessing which flows up from the root—that is, the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant, the Jewish fathers being the source of this blessing on an earthly level since the covenant was confirmed and ordained to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.)

11:18. But Paul's warning here is that such privilege should not be an occasion for Gentile disdain of the fallen Jews (μὴ κατακαυχῶ τῶν κλάδων). Indeed, even if the Gentiles do boast, as Paul warns them not to do, the boast is empty since they depend on the root and not the root on them. That is to say, as our Lord told the woman of Samaria, salvation is of the Jews. It is the blessing of Abraham into which the Gentiles have come. The Gentiles have become indebted to the same source as the natural branches were.

11:19-20. The Gentile may say that his privilege is the direct purpose of God in breaking off the natural branches, which is a boast, of course, but Paul does not deny its truth (compare the word Καλῶς). But he reminds the Gentiles that they enjoy this privilege by faith, as the Jews lost theirs by unbelief. This should lead to a holy fear rather than to haughtiness. What Paul had in mind here is not so much the faith of an individual but the observable phenomena that it is the Gentile world that is responding in largest measure to the call of faith in the gospel, while the Jews, for the most part, are unbelieving. Hence, the present privilege of Gentile humanity is directly tied to

its responsiveness to the gospel, just as the loss of privilege by the Jews is tied to their unresponsiveness.

11:21. It follows from this that a loss of responsiveness among Gentiles can have the same calamitous effect on them that it did on the Jews.

11:22. Hence, the Gentiles should observe that God knows how to be both kind and severe (cp. χρηστότητα καὶ ἀποτομίαν Θεοῦ). His severity is seen in the Jewish people who have fallen; His kindness is now the experience of Gentile humanity, but is conditioned on a continuance in that kindness. Otherwise, the Gentile world will be cut off, thus tasting the same severity God has shown toward the Jews. Once again, what is in view here is not individual, personal salvation, which, of course, cannot be lost. Paul is discussing the relative positions of the Jew and the Gentile in the program of God. The Jew had been naturally central in God's purposes and, hence, singularly blessed because he was naturally descended from the root. But having fallen, the Gentile world, contrary to what was to be expected naturally, has been given the central place of blessing, but is quite capable of losing it. We may observe that today Christendom as a whole is just about as hollow and unbelieving as Judaism was in Paul's day. Moreover, the contemporary rejection of biblical truth, which is more and more overt among Gentiles is a clear symptom of Gentile failure to continue in the divine kindness and presages the loss of privileges which lies ahead. That is to say, the Jews will once again regain the central place in God's program which the Gentiles have had for so many centuries. One might see a clear note of this in the revival of the Jewish state and their recapture of Jerusalem, though they are still unbelieving.

11:23. The regrafting of Israel awaits their quickening to faith. Paul phrases this conditionally, as also the previous statement about the Gentiles (cp. v 22). But from verses 25-27, it seems clear that he anticipates the Gentiles will not continue in divine goodness and that the nation of Israel will not continue in unbelief. God is well able, he affirms, to graft Israel in again.

11:24. Indeed, the humbling thing is that it is far more natural to expect the restoration of Israel to privilege than it was to expect Gentile privilege in the first place. The Gentiles are not naturally the central focus of the divine purposes—the Jews are. This is not to say it is not natural for God to bless Gentiles—it has always been and always will be—but Paul has been talking about a position once occupied by the Jews in which the Gentiles have replaced them. Taken in the light of the statement (Ἐπεὶ καὶ σὺ ἐκκοπήσῃ, v 22). Paul seems in verses 23-24 to now be contemplating replacement of the Gentiles by the Jews. This, he is affirming, would scarcely be surprising. The grafting in of the Gentiles was profoundly out of the ordinary. The grafting in of the Jews to their own olive tree would be quite natural.

11:25-27. Now Paul states the whole point directly and succinctly. The setting aside of Israel was only partial (cp. ἀπὸ μέρους)—that is, not all the branches were broken off, and it was only temporary. It is until the πλήρωμα of the Gentiles comes in.

The reference in πλήρωμα is undoubtedly to God's blessing on the Gentiles in salvation. There may be an allusion to fruitage against the background of the olive tree metaphor. This πλήρωμα may be thought of not only as the fruit of the gospel among the Gentiles in the church age, but also the same kind of fruit in the Great Tribulation (cp. Rev. 7:9-14). For the conversion of Israel described by Paul in verses 26-27 is clearly at the advent of Christ to reign, while the remnant of

Israel, the 144,000, will be converted as a firstfruits to God in the tribulation era, the first half week (cp. Rev. 14:4). It will not be until the very end that *all* Israel will be saved. This is proved by the quotation found in verses 25-27 and taken from Isa. 59:20-21 (see the context in Isaiah). Hence, Paul thinks of the very end of the age as the point at which Israel will be grafted in again. God's covenant will be established with them and nationally, as well as individually, their sins will be taken away. They will then be a people whose deliverer has come to them and has taken away their impiety (ἀσεβείας). When that occurs, God's special purposes with the Gentiles will be complete—their fullness being realized in the multitude of their saved—but their privileged place on the olive tree will have been lost and they will once more be subordinated to Israel. In fact, the passage of Isaiah quoted here by Paul is followed immediately by one that clearly reveals Gentile subordination (note Isa. 60:1-22, especially vv 3, 5, 11-12, and 16). This is the whole point, of course, of this passage.

(It may be suggested that the final token of Gentile unbelief will be the new religion of the man of sin during the last half week wherein Christianity is explicitly repudiated by the Gentile world. It will be the consummation of the mystery of lawlessness already now at work (cp. 2 Thess. 2) and which will make the Gentiles as a whole as hostile to Christ and His gospel as the Jews were in Paul's day. Though multitudes of Gentiles are saved during the last half week, they will actually be a persecuted minority, just as believing Jews were a persecuted minority in Paul's day. This final situation in the Gentile world will fully justify God's cutting it off from its special privileges and will signal His return to Israel with the fullest blessing.)

11:28. The apostle now recapitulates what he has expounded concerning the state of Israel. In the interest of Gentile salvation (δι' ὑμῶν), they have been allowed to become hostile to the gospel, but this does not change God's electing purpose as a result of which they are still especially beloved on behalf of the patriarchs to whom God's promises were originally made. (Note the parallelism of Scripture highlights the paradox of their hostility and God's continuing love.)

11:29. The promises made to the Jewish fathers, like all of God's gifts and calling, are irrevocable. Hence, they are certain of fulfillment whatever the present Jewish condition may be.

11:30-31. This fact that God's calling is irreversible leads to a new perspective on present Jewish disobedience. (Notice the inferential γαρ.) For just as once the Gentiles disobeyed God, pagan idolatry being no doubt prominently in mind, and have found an occasion for mercy through Jewish disobedience (τη τούτων απειθεια), so now similarly the Jews are disobedient to this Gentile mercy. That is, they oppose it and are thus prepared for mercy themselves. That is, the very disobedience of Israel was designed for (note ἵνα) their ultimate mercy. Only by allowing this proud, self-righteous nation to descend to a level of bitter hostility to the truth could God bring them to the same deep need of His mercy as the pagan Gentiles had. Of this, of course, Paul is the great prototype in his own person. Reduced to spiritual nothingness on the road to Damascus, he had to renounce all claim on God's favor and become a debtor to His mercy. For, despite his legal rectitude, he had persecuted the Son of God in the person of His Church. So also some day Israel will see the Christ they have opposed and be stripped thereby of every vestige of self-righteousness. (Cp., especially, Zech. 12:10-14.) But only by allowing such overt hostility to manifest itself in Israel could God make them fully aware of their need of His mercy. They had opposed that mercy among Gentiles (and here it should be noted that τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει is best

taken as the object of ἠπειθήσαν), but in so doing they were actually putting themselves in the place where they must and could be its objects as well.

11:32. For (γὰρ) God was actually thereby rendering man universally dependent upon His mercy. (Τοὺς πάντας I take to refer to both Jews and Gentiles.) As Gentile disobedience had long since closed them in under the unmistakable dominion of sin, so now Jewish rebellion was having the same effect on them so that they are, so to speak, locked into sin together with the Gentiles. (Notice the σύν in συνέκλεισε.) But this reduction to the Gentile level of guilt was for the purpose (ἵνα) that they might receive the same mercy as Gentiles.

11:33. Paul is deeply moved by the wealth of wisdom and knowledge in all of this (Πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως is an apparent hendiadys.) So unexpected is this divine methodology for dealing graciously with all, and especially the Jews, that Paul declares that God's decisions (κρίματα) and His procedures (ὁδοί) are inscrutable.

11:34. Man's unaided intellect can neither penetrate the divine mind nor contribute anything to its counsels.

11:35. Indeed, man is ever the debtor in his relation to God, not only unable to counsel God in His purposes, but unable to contribute to God anything at all which will induce God to be favorable to him on the basis of merit. Man never gives anything to God first so as to be deserving of repayment. The divine wisdom is that man shall owe everything to his Creator so that God initiates all man's good. Man, especially Jewish men, have always found this hard to accept; and God's wisdom is to work towards that acceptance by allowing human sin, whether in Gentile or in Jew, to reduce men to the status of debtors to divine mercy.

11:36. The end of it all is God's eternal glory for all of future time.

CHAPTER 12

The starting point for the extended section on Israel and the Gentiles which the Apostle has just completed (Rom. 9-11) was the thought of the unfailing love of God in Christ which climaxed Romans 8 (cf. 8:39). In reality, Romans 9-11 give us a deeper appreciation of that love; for there we can see it in its relationship to God's total purposes. The goodness of God has gone out to Gentiles in the form of love precisely because that (love) goodness has been for now rejected by Israel. But the key word of Romans 9-11 is, in fact, not love but mercy (cf. Rom. 9:15, 16, 18, 23; 11:30, 31, 32). But love and mercy are virtual synonyms, as is proved by the story of the Good Samaritan where mercy fulfills the command to love one's neighbor. The love, therefore, of which Paul has spoken so glowingly in Romans 8:35-39, turns out to be for Gentiles a supreme act of mercy occasioned in turn by God's love for Israel. For through His mercy to the Gentile world, God strives to extend His salvation to Israel, too. Israel thus is its starting point. It is humbling to the Gentile mind to take in this truth, but it is the only proper way for the Gentile to estimate the character of the divine love to him. Like the victim of thieves on the road *away* from Jerusalem, the Gentile sinner has been visited in mercy by an outcast Savior (the true Good Samaritan)—this mercy being his for the very reason that the Savior *is* an outcast in Israel's sight. Thus Paul has used Romans 9-11 not only to explain God's ways with mankind, but especially to deepen the Roman's sense of utter indebtedness to a divinely originated mercy which is a surprising and undeserved benefaction.

To these mercies, then, Paul refers in Romans 12:1 in calling upon his readers for a full obedience to God's will. In reality, Romans 12:1-2 recapitulate the Christian-life truth Paul has expounded in Romans 5-8. Romans 9-11 deepen Gentile motivation to put this truth into practice and, following the recapitulation of these two verses, Paul will discuss—for the first time—some specifics of the divine will for Christian living.

12:1. The key to the thought of this verse lies in the verb παραστήσαι which is picked up from Romans 6:13, 16, 19 where the meaning seems clearly to be that of the actual use of the members of the body either for sin (which is warned against) or for righteousness (which Paul urges). Such use, in the latter case, is the actual experience of walking in newness of life (i.e., it is true Christian living). Thus, Romans 12:1 does not call for some kind of preliminary dedication to God, but for actual obedience to God through the body—an obedience now conceived as a priestly service of sacrifice. (Note that λατρείαν carries this priestly connotation.)

In this connection the term ζῶσαν is especially relevant in the light of the doctrine of Romans 6-8. For it is particularly the problem of the spiritual deadness of the body that has occupied the discussion in chapters 7 and 8. Here one recalls such verses as 7:23, 24, 25 and 8:10, 11. While Romans 6 calls on us to use our physical members for God, Romans 7-8 tells us how this can be done—that is, only by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit (cf. 8:11). The life lived to the flesh is a species of death (Rom. 8:13a), and the life lived by the Spirit is truly the life of a son of God (Rom. 8:13b-14). Thus to present the body as a sacrifice which is *living* implies, for Paul, the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. And if the body is thus “living” (the first predication about θυσίαν), it will inevitably be also “holy” and “pleasing” to God (the second and third predications about θυσίαν). The whole life of obedience thus enjoined, is the only rational (λογικην) priestly service we can render in the light of the surpassing divine mercies. It is a form of self-giving to God, as the body and its members become the holy vehicles of His good

pleasure. As such, it is similar to Old Testament sacrifices, but also markedly different. In the Old Testament, a living animal body was put to death by sacrifice, but here the believer-priest brings a dead human body (cf. 8:1c) to the “altar” of obedience and in the process of actual obedience—that is, in the process of sacrifice—this dead body becomes truly alive by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident then that what Paul calls for here is not momentary dedication to God, but a lifetime of obedient living by the Spirit’s power.

12:2. The service, however, of which Paul has spoken in verse 1 is a λογικὴν service which implies that mental and rational processes are crucial to it. Hence, he proceeds to stress the importance of the *mind* in the transforming process of spiritual obedience. Romans 12:2 is thus not sequential to 12:1, but is contemporaneous with it. The body can only become a living sacrifice as we are transformed through the mind so that we actually experience God’s will.

Two alternatives are presented by the apostle and he probably views them as inescapable alternatives for the believer. On the one hand is world conformity, on the other Christian transformation. All life and experience testifies to the inevitability of change, so that one of these processes or the other must be expected to be taking place continually. The former occurs almost inevitably by means of our exposure to the corrupt character of “this age” (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ), unless, that is, by deliberate choice, we seek renewal of mind.

The mind (νοῦς) is viewed by the Apostle in Romans as the seat of our regenerate understanding and desire. The body by itself is the slave of sin, but the *mind* is basically enslaved to God’s will (cf. Rom. 7:22-25; cf. δουλεύω). The *renewing* of the mind is nothing else than the continual keeping fresh and vital of the mind’s understanding of, and desire for, the will of God. If our thoughts are distracted to the law, as a law, and hence focused on sin—or if they are focused on sin by any means—the vitality and energy of our spiritual desire is sapped and spiritual defeat can take place. To *renew* the mind, however, is to cultivate the spiritual-mindedness which is life and peace (cf. Rom. 8:5-6). There is no greater danger than the waning from consciousness of spiritual interests and desires. The renewing of the mind counteracts this.

The process by which the mind is renewed is not here spelled out, but is fairly obvious. The focusing of heart upon the spiritual interests of life—i.e., upon the things of Christ—is a conscious, deliberate process in which the Word plays a permeating part and in which the Holy Spirit becomes the vitalizing force. If spiritual desires are before our minds, and dominant in them, then this itself reveals the Spirit has been, and is, at work. There remains, however, no better figure of it all than the image of the tree whose hidden roots draw up the water that is presented in Psalm 1. The synergism of our will and the Spirit’s work in us remains mysterious, but is no less real. The Spirit does not work apart from the human will, but in and through it. The renewing of the mind is the Spirit’s work in us, but inseparable from the continuous choices of the will about what we will concentrate on and take an interest in.

The *proving* of God’s will, as the verb δοκιμαζειν implies, is more than mere knowledge of that will. It is the putting of that will to the test—i.e., of actual experience—so that we become “experts” as it were in what is good and acceptable and complete before God (Cf. the verb in Luke 14:19; Rom. 1:28; and especially Rom. 14:22 where it almost equals “does.”)

12:3. Now, for the first time in the epistle, Paul will deal with the specifics of God's will for us. Romans 1:18-8:39 have presented the general principles which underlie salvation from divine wrath. Romans 9-11 give us the conception of God's mercies to us as Gentiles which will motivate us to live by those principles. Romans 12:1-2 recapitulate the principles against the background of this mercy, and Romans 12:3 and following show how the life based on these principles ought to be lived out in its details. It is the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God" spelled out in specifics.

The first step in perceiving the divine will for us is to set sober objectives for ourselves. The verbs ὑπερφρονεῖν and φρονεῖν suggest more than mere thought and carry the overtones of our goals and perspectives. It is our general outlook at the core of which are our aims. These should be based, not on fleshly conceit or unrealistic attitudes about ourselves, but should be sensibly (εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν) grounded in what God enables us to believe is within His purpose for us. The μέτρον πίστεως He grants us will be rooted in a spiritual assessment of our lives and capabilities in the light of Scripture and not in a proud ambition which strives for unreasonable attainments.

Paul says this through the grace given to him (cf. the same phrase in v 6)—i.e., he is an apostle by divine grace. He wishes everyone among his Roman audience to have a sober appreciation of the grace given to them as well.

12:4-5. Sober thought about oneself will take into account the reality that in a body there are numerous members with differing functions, so that the Christian Church is a unity of diverse members whose relationship to each other is like that of members within a physical organism (...ὁ δὲ καθὶς ἀλλήλων μέλη). This means that we do not strive (cf. φρονεῖν) to imitate another member, nor usurp its function, but rather to play our own particular God-given role within the Church. This is God's "will" for us.

12:6-7. Hence, since our gifts differ in accordance with God's particular grace to us, they should be used with this reality in mind. Indeed, though a Christian may have the same *kind* of gift as another, he does not really have the *same* gift. In Paul's case, the grace given to him (cf. v 3) was that of apostleship, yet such an apostleship as set him off from other apostles (cf. 1 Cor. 15:8-10!). So, no two Christians have precisely the same form of divine grace and their gifts differ not only in *type* but also in numerous other aspects as well—even when the type may be the same.

But Paul's point here is that, whatever the grace given, it is to be properly expended. So a prophet, for whom faith is an indispensable element in his gift, ought to prophesy in direct proportion to the faith granted to him for this. This concept is akin to that stated in v 3. The prophet does not claim more spiritual perception—nor less—than the operative faith in his gift lays hold of. Imagination, as well as deception of others, are to be studiously avoided. Observe that the articles with ἀναλογία and πίστεως imply: "the particular proportion of his particular faith." No doubt there were prophets to whom great revelations were made and others to whom small. By faith they each apprehended their own revelation and in accord with that apprehension they were to prophesy.

In regard to other gifts, they are to be used as their nature suggests. (Perhaps the verb to be supplied here is a copula—"or service, let us be [let him be] in his [τῆ] service.") One is to involve himself in service, teaching, or exhortation (v 8a) in accordance with the character of his gift.

The thoughts are succinctly expressed, but the guiding and controlling idea is that of v 6a. Whatever our particular grace, it is to be used accordingly.

12:8. After the reference to exhortation (which also embraces the concept of comfort and encouragement), the list of gifts probably ends. This is signified by the end of the εἴτε...εἴτε construction and by the fact that Paul is making a transition to more general attributes (cf. v 9). But the principle governing gifts also applies to the activities specified in v 8b. As gifts are to fulfill their intended function, so activities done for God are to be done as such activities are intended to be done. Giving ought never to be niggardly or grudging, for giving is only properly executed with generosity (ἐν ἀπλότητι—the noun probably looks as much at the spirit as at the quantity given—i.e., it is that single-heartedness in giving which leads to liberality.) Ruling, or leading, is only properly done if the spirit of responsibility is evident in one's diligence (σπουδῆ equals earnestness, zeal, etc.). Mercy is properly bestowed when freely bestowed and not given out of a spirit of duty or with reluctance.

Hence, the individuality recognized in vv 4-6a is worked out—through gifts and other forms of service—in the principle of full exploitation of both abilities (6b-8a) and opportunities (8b). God's good and acceptable and perfect will is for me to be me, but the very best me I can be.

12:9. But spiritual gifts (vv 6-8a) and opportunities (v 8b) can never be effectively used for God apart from genuine love. Hence Paul now moves to the theme of love.

The sequence of material here is strikingly like that in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, where a discussion of gifts precedes a discussion of love. In fact, the qualities predicated of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 bear numerous striking similarities to the contents of Rom. 12:9-13. In fact, it is possible to understand ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος as the major statement, and all the remaining statements of vv 9b-13 as subordinate. (The participles ἀποστύγοντες and κολλώμενος strike the reader initially as subordinating in force even if not strictly tied grammatically to v 9a. The adjectives used in the following verses are roughly equivalent in force to the participles. Likewise only the quality *love* is in the nominative, whereas the rest of the words that might be thought to be parallel to it [i.e., τὴν φιλαδελφίαν] are in the oblique cases. Hence, ἡ ἀγάπη can be seen as the leading idea and the remaining assertions as, in a sense, explications of it.)

According to 1 Corinthians 13:6, love finds no pleasure in evil but only in what accords with truth. Hence, if our love is to be truly unhypocritical (ἀνυπόκριτος)—i.e., real and genuinely Christian—it must obviously be holy. Hence: Ἀποστύγοῦντες τὸ πονηρὸν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ. Those who love in a truly spiritual way must necessarily have a hatred for evil as a thing inimical to the welfare, not merely of themselves, but of those whom they love, while at the same time they cleave to the good as that which is alone beneficial to themselves and those who are loved. (Love, therefore, seeks to wash the feet of those loved—cf. John 13).

12:10. But genuine, unhypocritical love—on a spiritual level—is one that is also marked by a special affection for the brotherhood. If our love does not take cognizance of our bond in Christ and respond vigorously (φιλόστοργοι) to that bond, it can hardly be genuine in a truly Christian sense.

Moreover, such love is necessarily self-effacing. It is quite content to give to others in this brotherhood the place of honor rather than seeking it for oneself. Our Lord taking the place of servant by washing His disciples' feet clearly exemplifies this principle.

12:11. This self-deprecating willingness to give others the more prominent place is not, however, the same as ceding to them all responsibility. An unhyprocritical love will set a pattern of diligence (τῆ σπουδῆ) in contrast to indolence, and this will spring naturally from an inner earnestness that can be described as a boiling (ζέοντες) spirit, and all of this will be focused on a genuine bond-service to the Lord. The man who truly loves knows he is God's servant (δουλεύοντες). As such he has God's interests in others at heart. His own personal honor is not an issue (v 10b) but his diligence and fervency of spirit are the marks of a true submission in bond-service to his Lord.

(The verb δουλεύοντες, of course, implies actual activity, making something of a triad out of the statements of v 11—the “slave-service” capping the triad. We are to be diligent—fervent—actually serving. Love is more than a *passive* brotherly warmth and renunciation of personal honor. Love is *active* and this alone adequately fills out—and expresses—the true warmth and self-denial Paul has enjoined in v 10.)

(The idea in ζέοντες probably is related to the kind of diligence [cf. σπουδῆ] which springs from within and therefore cannot be suppressed. This it results naturally in bond-service to God.)

12:12. The servant of the Lord (cf. δουλεύοντες, v 11) is a man who, by his very service, is accumulating a larger and richer *hope*. Hope, in Romans, is primarily the eternal destiny to which God calls us, in particular our heirship as God's children and potential joint-heirship as fellow-sufferers with Christ (cf. 8:17-25). In this we are to rejoice while loving the brotherhood and serving the Lord in their midst.

And it is the capacity to rejoice in hope that makes us capable of enduring (ηπομενοντες) in tribulation. When our joys are centered within time and contemporary experience, the collapse of those joys undermines our strength in trouble. But where the hope is solidly fixed on things eternal, strength is possible amidst present trials.

But this will beget the spirit of prayer. The man with a deep eternal hope in which he rejoices, and who thus can bear up under tribulation, will be able to turn to God in persevering prayer (προσκατερούντες). Indeed, endurance in trouble and persistence in prayer are spiritual Siamese twins. The one is never found without the other.

All three of the qualities listed in this verse are empowered by love—which is explicated by the entire list from vv 9b-13. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:7-8: πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει. Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε ἐκπίπτει.) The man who loves others (and in that spirit serves the Lord, v 11) has opened to him new vistas of spiritual hope (cf. 1 Thess. 2:18), has new sources of strength for endurance (2 Tim. 2:10), has new reasons for persevering prayer (Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:9). Love brings to *full development* (cf. πάντα in 1 Cor. 13:7) hope, endurance, faith.

12:13. Moreover, a man who has faced trouble of his own with endurance and steadfast prayer, will have heightened sensitivity to the needs of his brethren and will minister to them (ταῖς

χρείαις τῶν ἀγίων κοινωνοῦντες). To those traveling from place to place he will have his door opened to relieve the burdens of their journey (τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες). (In ancient times it was particularly with an eye to the wayfarer that hospitality was enjoined, though, of course, every form of hospitality is commended in a phrase like this.) The Christian who has known trouble, and endured it, so far from becoming self-centered will actually become more open-handed and more eager to seize the opportunity of Christian fellowship which hospitality affords. Thus the list ends with the commendation of concrete and specific deeds of love as a capstone to the more general qualities with which it began.

12:14. From the *attributes* of love (vv 9-13), the Apostle now turns to the *attitudes* of love

(vv 14-21). What is the inner spirit which love exhibits? To begin with, love wishes even its persecutors well and a spirit of blessing expresses itself through truly Christian lips rather than a spirit of cursing. Thus love lays aside its own personal feelings and expresses its desire that good may attend other men—despite the hostility they may show.

12:15. Such a spirit, obviously, is one marked by a sensitivity to the feelings and experiences of others. Love thus does not envy the joys of another, but shares them. It does not shut itself off from others in their sorrows either, but enters into them. The man interested only in himself may indeed curse those who persecute him and remain unfeeling in the presence of human joy or sadness, but not the unselfish spirit of love.

12:16. And because love is, in fact, not basically self-seeking but attuned to what others feel, its expression within the Christian Church manifests a spirit of humble impartiality that regards the feelings of the lowly.

Christians ought all to have a similar concern for one another (ὁ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες) which will exclude the self-serving tendency to pay special attention to those we deem important (μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες) while ignoring the lowly and insignificant (ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι). Such prejudice is usually an expression of worldly pride and a feeling that we are too wise and clever to take much note of those lightly esteemed (Μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς). Thus love cultivates an impartiality (cf. τὸ αὐτὸ) among believers toward one another that is marked by special efforts to cultivate the lowly (cf. συναπαγόμενοι) with a simplicity of mind (cf. Μὴ...φρόνιμοι) all too aware of its own vast ignorance before God.

12:17. If then, the Christian is truly concerned with the welfare of others (v 14), emphatic with the experiences of others (v 15), and condescending humbly to the lower standing of others (v 16), he will be preeminently forbearing rather than impatient and vengeful. It will not be his spirit to give bad for bad, but rather to have special regard (Προνοούμενοι) for the need to set decent and honorable things (καλὰ) before everybody—including those who have set bad things before us.

The expression πάντων ἀνθρώπων probably hints that Paul has especially the unconverted in mind, since they are the ones most likely to render us evil. But the phrase κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ need not in itself refer only to serious injury or offense but comprehends as well all of the more minor slights and hurts that men—whether unsaved or not—may deal to us. A sharp word is not to be repaid with a sharp word any more than a wound is to be repaid with a wound. Rather, as the last

half of the verse suggests, some good thing is to meet the eye of the offending party—for it is good things we are to be careful to place before *all* men.

12:18. It is therefore not the desire of the believer to wage war with his opponents till they are overcome, but to live at peace with them. It is not his desire to see that every bad thing—however trifling—gets its proper retribution, but rather, by withholding such retribution in favor of setting good before men, to achieve tranquil relations with them. This is to be his objective to the extent to which it is achievable (Εἰ δυνατόν), and he is to make sure that all that can be done from his side (τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν) to achieve it is done. (Prayer, patience, a positive approach [cf. Phil. 4:8] are among the resources to be brought to bear here.)

12:19. If, however, despite this strenuous effort after peace, we nonetheless find we still have enemies (as Paul did, because he preached Christ), we are to avoid personal vengeance (conscious that though man may hate us, God’s love is our portion—note ἀγαπητοί), and we are to leave such matters to God (whose love for us, in fact, makes His righteous retribution sure to our enemies). Vengeance is God’s personal prerogative—to take it into our own hands is to “steal” what is His.

12:20. Free then from the concern for vengeance, we may devote ourselves to mercy toward our enemies. While God tends to their retribution, we can tend to their needs! Such kindness, in fact, deepens their guilt and makes more terrible the justice that will overtake them if they persist in hostility. Thus coals of fire are heaped on their head. Yet it is also possible that our kindness may bring them the recompense of shame and remorse (the “burning” head and face of a man who is shamed may be suggested by the imagery of the coals of fire). Thus out of their deep shame they may actually become our friends, putting hostility aside. Perhaps, indeed, the vengeance God will take is to convict them of their wickedness and destroy their hostility. If so, the victory we win is greater than destructive judgment.

12:21. Hence, we are to understand that good is a greater power than evil, and that to meet evil with evil is to experience moral and spiritual defeat. But to meet evil with good is to defeat evil—in ourselves, spiritually, first of all and then perhaps in others.

CHAPTER 13

13:1. From the consideration of the necessity of avoiding the spirit of vengeance toward our enemies, it is natural for Paul to move on to the general spirit of law-abiding which is to characterize Christians. We neither take the law into our hands (for revenge), nor in any way violate its rightful authority over us.

Submission, therefore, to earthly authorities (ἐξουσία) is the principle on which we respond to them (v 1a), since the authority they wield is necessarily divine in origin. There is no such thing as authority apart from God (v 1b). Hence any that exists (οὔσαι) does so by His ordinance (1c).

13:2. It follows then, that resistance toward established authority is a resistance to a divinely appointed arrangement (διαταγή). Those who resist may expect punishment (κρίμα) for that (cf. *The Assassins of Caesar*, Sect. I, 129). This punishment may be administered by the authority against which we rebel, or God may visit it upon the rebel in some other way. Paul, like everyone else, knew that governments are sometimes overthrown, but his point is that—regardless of success or failure—since God has ordained the authority, the ultimate direction of the rebellion is God-ward, and so there is a penalty involved. The principle applies not merely to revolutions, but to any form of rebellion against the authority—such as crime or illegal business practices, etc.

13:3. Naturally, this punishment (13:2, κρίμα) is most usually meted out by the authority we flout (though God may also render retribution in other ways), so that we need to recall that rulers are basically a terror to those doing evil rather than to those doing good. (Paul, of course, knew that the authorities too often acted capriciously and even illegally—Acts 16, but his statements affirm a principle that is basically and generally true.) The best way to avoid fear of governmental power is to be doing what is good, and (normally) this will win us praise. Indeed, even corrupt and totalitarian governments find it often expedient to praise good citizens who obey its laws.

13:4. Nor is it inappropriate for a Christian to value the praise of constituted authority, for (γὰρ) that authority is God's servant to us (σοι) with that which is good as its goal (εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν). The phrase εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν probably suggests both that our temporal well-being (this equals our "good") is the real aim that God has behind government as it affords us security and stability of life, and also that government is designed to prompt us to do what is good (note that the τὸ ἀγαθόν of v 3 is repeated here). Thus the phrase is something of a word-play picking up the thought of v 3, but adding to it the idea that we benefit from the service government renders as God's διάκονός.

But, conversely, government is equally the servant of God in the execution of wrath. Hence, if we do the evil thing (τὸ κακόν), we do not enjoy the good it is designed to bring us, but rather the vengeance and wrath which it serves God by executing on those who do such evil. Its power of the sword is not an empty threat, nor an invalid right (both ideas are probably latent in εἰκῆ), but rather the instrument with which it does the service of vengeance for which God has also appointed it. It bears the sword not in vain precisely then because (γὰρ) it is God's agent or wrath.

13:5. Hence our obedience, which takes account of this wrath (οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργήν) shows this reason is not ignored), is even more demanded by our conscience which is aware of the

divine service (cf. v 4, διάκονος) which earthly authority is established to render to God. (We can only render to God the things which are God's if we are rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Our conscience demands the latter as an integral part of the former. Cf. Luke 20:25 and other places where Caesar is mentioned before God, since it is through this avenue of earthly obedience alone that we can fully render what is due to God.)

Conscience then instructs us not to rebel against God's διάκονός because that would be wrong toward God. And if we do, and feel the wrath of His διάκονός, it is after all *His* wrath we feel; and thus our conscience can only be clear if we avoid all reason for that wrath to reach us.

13:6. On the same grounds (διὰ τοῦτο), we are also to pay taxes, for in the light of v 1 even tax-gatherers—despite their own notorious reputation in Paul's day—must be regarded as agents of the divinely appointed authority and hence as λειτουργοὶ...Θεοῦ. This new term (contrast διάκονός in v 4) has a priestly overtone and suggests that their continual exercise (προσκαρτεροῦντες) of their tax-gathering duties is a function in which they are agents who render to God what is properly His due. Hence our taxes take on a sacred hue, for they serve God's ordained system of earthly government.

13:7. Now the Apostle broadens the obligation by means of the general principle: Ἀπόδοτε οὖν πᾶσι τὰς ὀφειλάς. We are therefore to render payment of various forms of taxation (φόρον...τέλος) as well as various forms of personal respect (φόβον...τιμῆν). The latter consideration, while it no doubt has government officials chiefly in mind (even—and especially—Nero!) is obviously broader (especially in the light of πᾶσι in this verse). Every man, in some way, is worthy of a true measure of personal respect (cf. 1 Peter 2:17).

13:8. Hence Paul now makes the fullest assertion of the principle he has in mind (for, though v 7a states it also, this verse moves climactically out of the context of governmental considerations). No obligation—of any kind or to anyone—is to be defaulted. (The general flow of thought from verses 6-8 indicates that what Paul is saying is that all obligations are to be met. There is no indication he means to forbid borrowing money.) We are to owe no man anything in the sense that we are not to fail to pay or fulfill any obligation so that—being unmet—we therefore owe it.

But there is an overriding obligation which, in a real sense, always remains unfulfilled (cf. εἰμή). That is love. Taxes can be fully paid, deferential treatment adequately given, but love remains always on the horizon of our obligations; for however much we render, we do not discharge our obligations to go on loving.

The reason for this is that, after all, love summarizes our obligations toward others (τὸν ἕτερον) and constitutes a fulfillment of God's law. But since I am obligated to that law till death, I never really cease to “owe” love—however I may fully discharge subsidiary debts which are covered by it.

13:9-10. And love is indeed the fulfilling of the law because (γάρ) every one of its commandments relative to others forbids some act that would injure them. Hence, since I myself do not wish such injury, all these commandments can truly be summed up (ἀνακεφαλαιούται) in the law of love itself by which I am to love others as I do myself. So, Paul repeats, love *does* fulfill the law, since it never works harm to another.

The principle of non-injury to another is likewise, by implication, the reason for my fulfilling every obligation to others (v 8a); for the non-fulfillment of an obligation is as real an injury to my neighbor as if, for example, I had stolen from him. Hence, too, the obligation to love is always with me, even while I discharge the particular obligations which are included within it. For the obligation to love is a summation of my total obligations and as such binds me to all the fulfillments of these as long as I live, so that I may injure no man.

13:11. All that the Apostle has been saying (12:3-13:10) about God's good and acceptable and perfect will (cf. 12:2) is a matter of urgency. If one is aware of the true character of the time (εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν), he will realize that the hour (ᾠρα) has arrived to be spiritually awake. Failure to pursue God's will is a sign of moral slumber, like that of the unbelieving world around us, and is totally inappropriate to the eschatological era in which we now live. Indeed, every passing day brings nearer the ultimate salvation experience which was in view when we believed in Christ.

Here, as elsewhere in Romans, σωτηρία signifies deliverance from wrath so as to share the life of Christ. As discussed in the body of the Epistle, this is chiefly the wrath of Romans 1:18 and following which we escape by living in union with the life of our risen Lord here and now. But Paul has also spoken of a future wrath (cf. 2:5) and statements like those of 5:9-10, while primarily applicable in context to the present form of God's wrath, nevertheless express an ultimate reality true for all justified believers (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:8-10). In fact, the salvation from ὀργή, which we can begin to experience immediately after we have believed (ὅτε ἐπίστεύσαμεν), from one point of view simply adumbrates our future salvation (as the firstfruits adumbrate the harvest, cf. Rom. 8:23 and notes). Hence, in this light, our *real* experience of salvation draws nearer each day despite the paradox that it was as near as possible when we believed. The implicit thought is that we can experience salvation at once after believing, and yet we still await salvation at the coming of Christ; and this comes steadily closer.

13:12. The call to awake, therefore, and to await our ultimate salvation experience, is predicated on the reality that the nighttime of human history is in its last stages, and the day-time of the world is near at hand. The reference to ἡ...ἡμέρα seems evidently an allusion to the Day of the Lord, which embraces not only the Savior's Advent for His people, but the advent of His kingdom as well.

For all this glorious future experience, we ought to be appropriately dressed! Having awakened from sleep (v 12), we are to take off (ἀποθώμεθα) our "night clothes"—i.e., the sinful works of the darkness. And in their place we are to put on (ἐνδυσώμεθα) our "day clothes"—here viewed under the imagery of weaponry (or, "armor," AV) of light.

As a general term τὰ ὅπλα may suggest defensive armaments as well as offensive ones. The τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ φωτός are such as both protect us from moral and spiritual defeat and also enable us to win moral and spiritual victory. (Cf. πανοπλία in Eph. 6.) Yet the more general sense of "implement," "tool," could be in mind here, especially in view of the use of ὅπλα in Romans 6. Thus it would stand in more precise contrast to ἔργα, and the two expressions would refer to contrasting spiritual activities. We divest ourselves of the "deeds of darkness" because we no longer *do* them, and we clothe ourselves with the "tools of light" because what we now *do* are to be the accomplishments of such tools. (The tools might then be general qualities of life like

“truth,” “righteousness,” etc.—cf. Eph. 6—which lead to the *doing* of deeds conformable to these qualities. They are the necessary “implements” of right actions.)

13:13. Hence we are to live in a decent (εὐσχημόνως) way—i.e., as those who are respectably “clothed” (the image continues in v 14). We are to walk thus arrayed, as though it were *already* day (Ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ), not as though it were still night and we were a part of it. The loose living of the night-time (κώμοις, μέθαις, κοίταις, ἀσελγείαις) is to be abandoned as well as—what may seem of lesser moment, but is not!—the contentious and jealous spirit of the night (ἔριδι, ζήλω).

13:14. In fact, in sum, we are to be clothed (ἐνδύσασθε) in Christ Himself. Since, when the day *does* dawn, we are destined to be like Him (cf. 8:29; 1 Jn. 3:2), we ought to be like Him now. The fashionably dressed believer who is waiting for the approaching day, is the one who is clothed in the experience of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. When men see us, they are to see Him.

Such a believer is fully committed in heart to such a life. He is not a double-minded man who makes some kind of “provision”—however tentative or partial—for another mode of living. He takes no “forethought” (πρόνοιαν) for the sinful flesh as regards (εἰς) its desires. (The AV probably catches the substantial idea. Τῆς σαρκὸς is a genitive depending of πρόνοιαν and εἰς ἐπιθυμίας, for “lusts” is explanatory of what provision is not to be made for. Less probably, τῆς σαρκὸς might go with ἐπιθυμίας so that we would read: “make no provision for the desires of the flesh.”)

The use of the word πρόνοιαν evokes a recollection of the νοῦς which figures prominently in the struggle of Romans 7 (cf. 7:23, 25) and also of the conception of victory through mental reorientation in Romans 8 (cf. 8:5-7). (As ὄπλα had recalled Romans 6, so the Christian-life segment of Romans is again in Paul’s thinking here.) The victorious Christian does not permit the kind of mental activity that paves the way for the flesh and its desires to find expression. He cultivates the spiritual-mindedness in which no “forethought”—and hence, no “provision”—is afforded to his sinful inclinations. His thought-life focuses on Christ whom he “wears”—not only in terms of actual activities, but in terms of inward determinations and interests—and the flesh is not allowed to preempt any effort toward being “clothed” well.

CHAPTER 14

14:1. The good and acceptable and perfect will of God (12:2) must also be worked out in relation to Christian brethren who are weaker by virtue of special scruples which they have. Their apprehension of the Christian faith (τῇ πίστει) is not broad or firm enough in these special areas to release them from the restrictions of their conscience. The law of love (cf. 13:8-10) dictates that such believers be accepted as they are and not engaged in quarrels about (their) opinions (μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν).

14:2-3. In such an issue, for example, as that of eating meat, Christian love dictates that the strong Christian not despise the weak one, nor the weak one pass judgment of the strong one—as though God had not accepted his stronger brother; for, in fact, God has (i.e., God accepts the meat-eater without condemnation of what he does in thus eating).

14:4. Judgment is inappropriate if the Christian will recall that the brother he judges is the household servant (οἰκέτην) of someone else—namely, God—and not his own servant. The thrust of the statement seems at first glance directed toward the weaker Christian (note μὴ κρίνεται...ὁ κρίνων), but is probably intended to apply to the strong Christian as well. Indeed, to despise a fellow believer (cf. μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτω, v 3) is a form of judgment in itself.

The believer then—whether weak or strong—who is tempted to judge his fellow Christian must remember that it is not *his* approval, but God's, that matters for his brother. His brother will stand or fall to his *own* Lord (note emphatic position of τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ).

But “standing” or “falling” implies not merely approval but the success or failure in Christian living on which God's approval is based. The Christian who is tempted to judge anticipates the failure of his brother, but Paul anticipates, rather, the brother's success (σταθήσεται). Whether the brother is the stronger brother whose meat-eating looks to the other like a stumbling block to such success, or whether the brother is the weak brother whose very scruples appear to presage failure, God is nevertheless—in either case—*able* to bring the brother to spiritual success and hence to gain the divine approval at the bema of Christ (δύνατος...ἔστιν ὁ Θεὸς στήσαι).

14:5. The fact is that “standing” does not ultimately depend on whether one eats meat or not. In a similar case like that of observing—or not observing—some special day, the main consideration is not so much *what* is done, but whether it is done from deep spiritual conviction.

14:6. If it is, then whether one observes the day or not, or whether one eats meat or not, what is being done is done *to the Lord*. This is the central issue—does the action of the believer reflect his orientation to the Lord? Does it manifest his relation to the Lord? Can he, as in the case of eating, do what he does in a spirit of thanksgiving?

14:7. For, the basic fact of our existence is, that purely self-centered living—or dying—is not possible. We do not exist—in life or death—alone, but in relation to God.

14:8. Hence whether we live, it is in relation to the Lord, and whether we die, this is also in relation to Him. After all, whether we live or die, we belong to Him. Consequently, we are at the core of things if we do whatsoever we do (eating meat or not, observing the day or not) with conscious and deliberate reference to Him, out of deep conviction of mind and heart (cf. v 5). It

is the *direction* of the action that matters in such cases of personal scruple, not so much the action itself.

14:9. But if indeed we are the Lord's (v 8), it follows that we must one day give an account to Him. (That is why it is so vital that our actions be out of deep conviction and done as unto Him—vv 5-8.) Hence Paul proceeds to affirm the Lordship of Christ in terms of His universal prerogative to judge. (Εἰς τοῦτο is prospective and is explained by the ἵνα clause.) It is for the purpose that He should exercise Lordship over both living and dead ones that He died, rose, and lived (read ἔζησεν). This threefold assertion is at first surprising, but the middle term (ἀνέστη) presents the event of His resurrection, which is the secret of His Lordship. The resurrection looks back to His death, in which He enters the sphere of dead ones, and is the means by which He triumphed over death, and thus became Lord of the dead (νεκρῶν). But the resurrection looks forward also to the new life He has entered, a life marked by His Lordship, whereas His life before the cross was in the form of a servant (Phil. 2). Hence by rising He triumphantly leaves the sphere of the dead and becomes supreme over them; and He triumphantly enters the sphere of the living and becomes equally supreme over them (ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ).

14:10. Hence it is most inappropriate for *us* to judge our brothers, or to despise them, in connection with their practice in doubtful things. (The σὺ is emphatic in both clauses.) We all must stand before the Bema of Christ. *He* is Lord—not we! Hence judgment is *His* prerogative, not ours! Rather we ourselves must stand before Him to be judged.

14:11-12. Indeed, there is no escaping this reality, and Paul affirms its truth by a quotation from Isa. 45:23. (In the main, Paul follows the LXX while paraphrasing the sense of the first part of the verse with the words—Ζῶ ἐγώ. But the Pauline paraphrase is uniquely appropriate in context with the resurrection of Christ. Because *He lives*, all will bow!) The statement from the prophet applies universally to every man. But some will fulfill its claims at the Great White Throne, while Christians to whom Paul writes, will fulfill them at Christ's Bema. His point here is perhaps all the more necessary since there *is* a sense in which we escape judgment (John 5:24). Yet the fact remains, we must still give a solemn accounting even though a judgment definitive of eternal destiny cannot occur for us.

14:13. In such a light as this, judgment of others (especially in doubtful things) ceases to have any point. Our concern must rather be to pass judgment on our own ways (ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κρίνατε μᾶλλον) so that these afford no stumbling block or trap for the brother we might have been tempted to judge. Obviously if we stumble him, we must answer for this as well.

14:14. Paul himself is confident that no *thing* is inherently unclean (κοινὸν). He is not, of course, talking about actions (i.e., stealing) which are always "unclean," but about the data of physical and temporal life—like food and drink. Yet if a man's conscience sees such things as unclean, they become to him a sin. (This is a first basic principle, but a second follows in vv 15-20. Its summation is in v 20b.)

14:15. If, however, I can do a thing with a clean conscience, I am not therefore necessarily at liberty to do it. If by doing such a thing I cause real grief (λυπεῖται) to a brother, of such a character as to work harm to him (Μὴ...ἀπόλλυε helps to clarify λυπεῖται), then my conduct is not governed by love—as indeed was the conduct of the Savior who died for that very brother! How could I—for mere food (τῷ βρώματί σου is emphatic in position)—destroy or harm one

whom Christ gave all to save (ἀπόλλυε in an eternal sense would be the very fate Christ died to keep him from).

14:16. Moreover, I am not to allow such a thing which is good for me to be severely censured in a way damaging to my Christian testimony. (The verb βλασφημείσθω implies more than a mere expression of disapproval, and suggests the kind of talk that destroys one's reputation.) Paul, of course, wished the believers to be able to recognize and accept disagreements about debated matters and to do so without harsh censure (cf. vv 3-8); and where this was done, neither the exhortation of this verse, nor the previous one, would be needful. But where real grief (λυπείται) or harm (ἀπόλλυε) or sharp criticism (βλασφημείσθω) arise from our actions, freedom needs to be sacrificed.

14:17. After all, the crucial matters in God's kingdom are not food and drink, but righteousness (which always does "right" to our fellow man) and peace (which seeks harmony with him) and joy (which rejoices when *he* is happy, too). Thus I will not do my brother harm, or create disharmony with him, or grieve him over my food and drink, since these matters are peripheral while the others are central.

14:18. And if I serve God by cultivating these qualities (έν τούτοις) rather than my own interests (but a δοῦλος has no right to do so: note δουλεύων), then I will win, not only God's approval, but man's.

14:19. I ought not therefore to pursue my own pleasure, but harmonious and profitable relations with my fellow Christians.

14:20. I must be careful not to allow my food to damage the work God is doing in the Church and in human lives. To do so would be to fail to be his servant (cf. v 18) and to make central what is merely incidental (again ἔνεκεν βρώματος is forward and emphatic: "such a thing as food") so that mere food hinders the prosperity of God's kingdom (cf. v 17). As a 'servant' I am to contribute to the work of God and thus to the upbuilding of the kingdom in which that work is being carried on, not to tear it down.

Hence, while a thing may be pure in itself (here καθαρόν, not κοινόν is used with perhaps a heightening of the moral overtones where κοινόν is a bit more ritualistically oriented), that pure thing becomes a positive evil in me if its effects are destructive to God's work.

14:21. Whatever the issue may be—the eating of animal flesh (κρέα), the drinking of wine (this issue must already have arisen—cf. 1 Tim. 5:23), or any other issue—my concern must be neither to trip my brother up, or trap him (but σκανδαλίζεται perhaps is more equal to "to scandalize"; cf. βλασφημείσθω in v 16), or weaken him. (If the ideas are: cause to fall, scandalize, weaken—the progression would be from the greatest damage to the least—but all are to concern us.)

14:22-23. My faith need not find expression in overt action to be real. God can see that I have faith to do a thing even when I sacrificially abstain from doing it. My urge to demonstrate it is unnecessary.

If I do a thing, Paul now reiterates, then the blessedness depends on my doing it without self-condemnation (δοκιμάζει seems here, as elsewhere, to be the "putting to the proof of experience"—hence in this context, perhaps, almost equal to "trying it out"). Nothing Paul has

said is to be taken by the weak brother as an excuse for ignoring his conscience. Real faith is requisite before a matter (like eating meat— ἐὰν φάγη) is attempted, and when it is absent, the doer stands condemned as guilty of committing a sin.

CHAPTER 15

15:1. It follows from all that Paul has said in chapter 14, that those whose faith is strong (οἱ δυνατοί) in the debated matters he has discussed ought to accommodate their conduct in the ways he has enjoined (cf. 14:13, 15-16, 19-21) to the conscience of those whose faith is weak (τῶν ἀδυνάτων) and thus to “bear” (βαστάζειν) the weaknesses of their brethren. This means that the “strong” cannot simply do as they please.

15:2. Indeed, the spirit of Christian love (cf. 14:15) will be displayed only as we unselfishly seek to “please” our fellow Christian (equals τῷ πλησίον) in what is good for his spiritual up-building (εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν). This, of course, does not mean that we merely seek the approbation of our fellow Christian—and thus “please” him in this superficial sense—but that we seek to further his progress with God and thus “please” him ultimately and truly. This may require the sacrifice of our own personal pleasure to accomplish.

15:3. But it is a truly Christ-like thing to do and reflects the spirit in which our Lord lived His earthly life. That spirit finds illustration in the Old Testament utterance drawn from Psa. 69:9. Though stating a general principle in the life of the Lord Jesus, its close association with the phrase “because zeal for Your house has eaten me up”—suggests that in the cleansing of the temple we have a concrete illustration of its meaning. In that incident alone—among all Gospel incidents—Christ draws upon His physical strength to act for God, so that in this situation we see Him as truly “strong” (i.e., δυνατός) both physically and spiritually. The force of this “strength” prevails over the collective opposition of the Jewish money-changers and merchants who do not challenge it with physical resistance. But in acting thus, the Lord Jesus acts not for self-interest (ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν) but for the interests and glory of God. He is moved by His zeal for God’s house (cf. Jn. 2:17) and by His concern for the “reproach” that was no doubt brought to the name of God by the fact that His house had become a “den of thieves” (cf., similarly, 1 Sam. 2:17). Such a reproach to God’s name was reproach that Christ accepted as His own concern (ἐπεπέσον ἐπ’ ἐμέ) and therefore as a matter requiring action to remove it. The Gentiles in particular might blaspheme God for this and our Lord was zealous that their reproaches might be replaced by prayer (cf. Mk. 11:17; Rom. 2:23-24).

So, too, the “strong” Christian must regard any reproach to God’s name as his own personal concern. He must take action to remove that reproach (or prevent it), and this may involve the sacrifice of personal pleasure or personal rights (cf. 14:16).

15:4. Thus the Old Testament Scripture, with its divine insight into our Lord’s inner motivations, becomes like all the Old Testament a source for our learning (εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν προεγράφη). And under its instruction, we can acquire the needed patience (ὑπομονῆς) and the needed encouragement (παρακλήσεως) to make the necessary personal sacrifices in order to “bear the weaknesses” of our weaker brethren, because we know that in thus acting to avoid reproach to God’s name, we act in the spirit of Christ Himself; and this cannot possibly be in vain or without reward. Thus we act *in hope* (τὴν ἐλπίδα) a hope that we have (ἔχομεν) because we are taught by the Scriptures and sustained and encouraged by them.

15:5. Hence the God who in this way supplies us with patience and encouragement (ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως) to do the right thing toward the weaker brother is able to

achieve through the personal sacrifices He thus inspires, a spirit of unity and mutual regard for one another in the church which is a true reflection of the attitude of God's Son (κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). The statement of Paul is virtually a prayer, and the wish it expresses is realizable if the truth and admonitions of verses 1-4 are heeded.

15:6. The result will be that in the collective worship of the Church, there will be such a spirit of oneness that the worship will come as it were from "one mouth" as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in word, song, and prayer.

15:7. But if the believers are truly to glorify (equals *worship*) God unitedly (vv 5-6), they will therefore (Διό) have to accept one another without regard to differences in scruples. (This thought picks up 14:1 and brings the discussion full circle.) Such mutual acceptance will be precisely the spirit of Christ who received us (ὁμᾶς) without qualification. Only such a spirit of mutual acceptance can be to the glory of God. The phrase εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ perhaps should be read with προσλαμβάνεσθε, and points to the function of united worship which such acceptance has for its goal (cf. δοξάζητε in v 6 and δοξάσαι in v 9). Even though the phrase be not directly related to προσελάβετο, the καθὼς implies analogy so that it may be affirmed that Christ also has received *us* to God's glory—i.e., that we might worship Him for the unstinting mercy with which we are received to salvation.

Thus the model of our Savior in extending unhindered acceptance for which we "glorify" God is the pattern as we accept "weaker" brothers without disputation so that they and we may "glorify" God together.

15:8-9a. We need to be reminded, in connection with all this, that worship is indeed a primary function of Gentile Christians (not to be marred by mutual bickerings over non-essential questions). So Paul affirms (λέγω δέ) that Christ has come to Israel as a servant of God's truth to a nation whose circumcision was the seal of their special relation to His truth, to the end that He might verify (εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι) God's promises to that nation's fathers and also that (δοξάσαι is probably a second object of εἰς τὸ) Gentiles might have reason to exalt God for His mercy.

In saying this, the Apostle is relating Gentile worship to the reality that "salvation is of the Jews" (as did the Lord Himself in John 4), and sees the Gentile situation as one marked out by sheer mercy which has overflowed to them as the result of the vindication of God's truth in Israel and the confirmation of God's promises to their fathers. When bread is on the table of the children, the "little dogs" are fed therefrom (cf. Mark 7:24-30). The Gentiles can hardly worship God aright apart from some sense of this reality.

15:9b-12. But that the coming of Christ to Israel (v 8) *does* entail Gentile worship (v 9a), can be demonstrated from Scripture. Four Old Testament citations serve Paul for this purpose.

The first (9a) is from Psa. 18:49 and expresses the words of God's King (Christ) who promises to extol God among the Gentiles for the victory God has given Him over His enemies (equals now, His exaltation to God's right hand; in the future, His triumphant return and reign).

The second (v 10) is the call of the Spirit through the words of Moses (Deut. 32:43) to the Gentiles to rejoice with Israel—again over the victory of God over His enemies. (The present situation that can be read in Psa. 18:48, especially in application to Christ's triumph in resurrection and ascension is not so evident here; rather a future victory is more clearly in view.)

The third proof-text (v 11) is drawn from a pure psalm of praise (Psa. 117:1) where, however, special reference is made to God's mercy (LXX— τὸ ἔλεος: Psa. 117:2—cf. Rom. 15:9a) and to God's truth (LXX— ἡ ἀλήθεια: Psa. 117:2—cf. Rom. 15:8).

The fourth Scripture (v 12) is diverse in force from the first three. The first three call attention to the praise God will receive among Gentiles—from *Christ Himself* (Psa. 18; cf. Heb. 2:12!) and then from the Gentiles themselves (Deut. 32 and Psa. 117). But this Scripture (Isa. 11:10) affirms the *basis* of it all—namely, that there shall be a “Root of Jesse” (i.e., a Davidic offspring: cf. TDNT, VI, 986) who will arise to rule the Gentiles and become the object of their hope. (In other words, this Scripture affirms the *basis* of it all, i.e., Gentile hope produces Gentile worship. Isa. 11:10 gives the reason why Psa. 18; Deut. 32; Psa. 117 come true.) Thus the theme of Rom. 15:8, the Jewish nature of Christ's coming, is here enforced by ἔσται ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί and made the key to Gentile expectation. The reference to Christ's rulership focuses on the future kingdom (as did Psa. 18 and Deut. 32 in context in the Old Testament), and it is, of course, in that kingdom that the hope of the Gentiles, even today, is centered. The mercy for which we glorify God is precisely the mercy that gives us hope of a destiny there.

15:13. Hence Paul concludes the section by devoutly wishing that his readers might be so gripped by their hope (note Ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος) that their hearts may be filled with all joy and peace as they believe that hope; and this will have the effect (εἰς τὸ) of magnifying our hope so that our lives, as it were, overflow with it—an effect due always to the power of God's Spirit within us. The thought may also be present in περισσεύειν... ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι—that our hope is actually augmented and enriched as we go on believing it. That is, we gain new expectations out of a life controlled by the joy and peace we have found in Christ.

Clearly, if the believers are thus dynamically filled and overflowing (πληρώσαι...περισσεύειν), there will be little room for petty bickering over “debated things” and there will be much room for worship. The power of the Holy Spirit thus to grip the heart is the secret of true worship. Hence we worship in spirit and in truth when He works this way within us.

15:14. Paul has now completed the body of his epistle. Verse 13 has concluded the extended discussion of “debated things” (14:1-15:13) and also the even longer section which spells out specifically God's “good and acceptable and perfect” will (12:3-15:13).

Now Paul turns to his Roman readers with assurances that his long epistle, spelling out in such detail Christian truth, has not been prompted by any deficiency that he senses in them. Rather, on the basis of all he has heard of them, he is confident that they are “full of goodness”—i.e., there is no lack of Christian character—and “filled with all knowledge”—i.e., there is no lack of Christian discernment. Not only do they not require help, but they are able to help (“admonish”) others themselves. (It may be observed that goodness is a key to spiritual knowledge which in turn fits one to “admonish.” The sequence is spiritually correct.)

15:15. Despite their spiritual attainments, however, Paul has written boldly to them by way of reminder. (Τολμηρότερον may be a true comparative and can imply that the very qualities he has praised in v 13 gave him added boldness to send an epistle which simply refreshed their memory.) But the purpose of reminding is not Paul's total intent but rather only a part of it (ἀπὸ μέρους is best read with the words that immediately follow: “partly as reminding you...”). Paul's most basic reason for writing is to be found in the special grace God has given him. The

main assertion of the sentence is: “I have then written more boldly to you, brethren...because of the grace which has been given to me by God...”

15:16. This grace is nothing less than a special priestly service that Paul renders in connection with a great sacrifice which is being offered up to God. He is a priestly ministrant (λειτουργὸν) toward Gentiles handling as a sacred duty (ἱερουργοῦντα) God’s gospel, and the goal of this activity is that the offering up of the Gentiles might meet with divine acceptance as being duly sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

The great ingathering of Gentile converts is here viewed by Paul as a sacrifice going up to God (since these Gentiles now are God’s) and Paul wishes so to minister the truths of the gospel that God can be fully pleased with that sacrifice. Here is where the epistle to the Romans (as well as Paul’s ministry) fits in. In Romans Paul has drawn out the implications of the gospel, not merely in terms of justification—though this is vital and basic, but also in terms of salvation from wrath in which victorious Christian living is seen to flow directly out of the gospel’s basic realities. Hence the one who has believed the gospel has been united with Christ in death and resurrection and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can now live a quickened life which is truly a “sanctified” life.

Hence Paul knows that Gentile Christians who live out the gospel in the way he has unfolded it (for this intention to unfold the gospel, cf. 1:16, 17) will by such lives enhance the acceptability of the great sacrifice of the Gentiles; for they will, by such living, exhibit the sanctifying work of God’s Holy Spirit.

Down through the centuries—and not merely in Paul’s day—the epistle to the Romans has served precisely the function Paul here specifies for it. Not only have Gentiles been won through its truths, but Christians among Gentiles (like the Romans) have been enabled to live lives more acceptable to God through the work of God’s Spirit. (Note: Of course, Paul speaks here of the sacrifice being simply “acceptable”—not *more acceptable*. But in this case, the two ideas amount virtually to the same thing. Paul wants the gospel ultimately to achieve everything among Gentiles that God has ordained—and this includes not merely justification, but the actual experiencing of “salvation from wrath.” The offering will be “acceptable” to God when the sanctifying work of the Spirit is seen as He purposes it to be seen, in Gentile lives. This is *more* than that the Gentiles should be acceptable to Him on the basis of imputed righteousness though in a sense they would be so on these grounds alone. The comparative idea, expressed in the notes, is simply a way of articulating Paul’s real goal. That the gospel should sanctify the *living* of justified Gentiles. This is the ultimate “acceptability” which alone is in view here.)

15:17. The Apostle continues to speak of the grace which God has given Him (cf. v 15) for ministry to Gentiles. It is because of this (οὗν) that he has a ground for holy boasting through Christ in the things of God. (Τὰ πρὸς θεόν may equal “in regard to things—of which one may boast—Godward”; but cf. BAG, p. 717, 5b.)

15:18-19. If he is to boast, it will assuredly not be of things that have not really been done by Christ through him—i.e., he will not boast in another man’s work (cf. v 20; 2 Cor. 10:15)—but in such things as have truly been wrought through the Apostle’s instrumentality.

The statement of vv 18-19 remains in fact a negative statement down through the first half of v 19. Thus it takes the form of a declaration of what he will *not* boast about while at the same time

detailing by obvious implication the kind of thing he *can* boast about. Only the last half of v 19 is a positive declaration of what he has done.

Here then the Apostle shows neither a worldly vanity nor a pseudo-humility. Christ has done much through him—but that is precisely the point. *Christ* has wrought (κατειργάσατο χριστός)—Paul is simply the instrument. Yet, obviously he was an available one (as his extensive travels—Jerusalem to Illyricum—show) and thus most delicately the Apostle balances the sense of personal accomplishment, which is rightfully his, with the realization that he could do nothing without his Lord. There is a proper spiritual exultation, but it must always be balanced in such a way as this.

The Apostle is in transition between his explanation of God’s purposes with him Gentileward—an explanation that he feels justifies his ministry to the Romans through this epistle (cf. vv 15ff)—and his impending explanation of the possibility of a personal visit to them. All his relations with the Romans, in fact, are predicated on his basic Gentile ministry. Thus when he speaks of fulfilling the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum (πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), he is both describing still God’s work through him and also laying the groundwork for the assertion that he is now free, after many years, to come to them.

15:20. Now the Apostle asserts the basic ambition (cf. φιλοτιμούμενον) which underlay accomplishments of the sort (οὕτω) he has mentioned. The drive to make Christ known where no one else had made Him known had inspired the achievements of vv 18-19, as well as controlled his plans relative to a visit to Rome (cf. v 22). (The Apostle’s accomplishments as an instrument in the hands of Christ—vv 17-19—were made possible by the energy of spiritual ambition. Where there is little ambition to serve there will be little service.)

15:21. The Apostle’s ambition was in fact stirred to actualization by an Old Testament Scripture (Isa. 52:15) which is set in the very midst of perhaps prophecy’s greatest narration of the suffering of Christ (Isa. 52:13-53:12). Such a prophecy might well—against the background of its fulfillment in the cross—stir a man to make such a Savior known to men. Paul had thus determined to be the man who would be the instrument for realizing Isaiah’s words. Like any true servant, his spirit in the presence of a divine declaration that the message must go out is well expressed in the words: “Here am I. Send me!”

15:22-23. This goal then, this driving ambition, had prevented a much desired visit to Rome for many years. But now that he had “fulfilled the Gospel” all the way around to Illyricum (v 19), he had no further “room” (τόπον) in that part of the world and could turn his eyes westward with the possibility of a visit to Rome becoming real.

15:24. But not separately from that ambition to preach Christ where He was not known was his desire to “establish” believers in the faith (cf 1:11). Paul anticipates that a satisfying visit to the Roman Christians will be followed by their setting him forward (προπεμφθῆναι) on his final stage of travel to that destination.

Hence the Apostle subordinates even worthy spiritual desires—i.e., to enjoy the fellowship of, and minister to, his brethren in Rome (cf. Rom. 1:10-11)—to his overriding goals in proclaiming the Gospel. His plans to spread God’s Word to Spain thus takes precedence even over such an opportunity as a visit to Rome in and of itself presented. He does the latter only when he can also do the former.

(Outline for preaching vv 17-24 as a challenge to evangelization: Paul is our example as a man with:

A. A Sense of Accomplishment—vv 17-19 B. The Energy of Ambition—vv 20-21 C. A Plan of Action—vv 22-24)

15:25-26. Important though his prospective mission to Spain was, the delivery of a Gentile contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem took precedence at the moment. That it did so shows the high priority the Apostle placed on this ministry (διακονῶν).

15:27. The Gentiles, in fact, were under obligation to their Jewish brethren. Not only was “salvation of the Jews,” but the Jerusalem church to which they were ministering had been the original starting point from which the Gospel had sounded forth into the Gentile world. Thus they had partaken significantly of their Jewish brethren’s spiritual things (πνευματικοῖς) and were acting in accord with a principle elsewhere expressed by Paul (e.g., Gal. 6:6; 2 Cor. 9:1-14) that such participation, or spiritual benefit, entailed a material obligation.

15:28. Paul, therefore, is eager to help forward to its conclusion this right and proper act of Gentile generosity. To do so was to insure the realization of this true fruit of their faith in Christ (σφραγισάμενος) implies a valid finalization—a fruit both gratifying to God and rewardable in respect to the Gentiles themselves.

Only then would Paul pass by them on his way to Spain.

15:29. But if such fruit could actually be brought to its realization, it would furnish a backdrop for Paul’s Gentile ministry (in Spain now) which would make possible a richer blessing from God upon his labors in the Gospel. Paul is sure that, under the circumstance described in v 28, he would be able to take his trip to Spain, via Rome, with a sense of—and anticipation of—the fullness of God’s blessing on the Gospel.

(The Greek word εὐλογία is almost a word-play, since it may suggest a “bounty” of the type involved in the collection itself. Cf. its use in 2 Cor. 9:5, 6!! Paul is thinking both of the bounty / blessing which the Gentile gift involved in itself, and of the “blessing” to which it could lead in the future Gentile ministry. The Gospel had produced this “blessing” for the Jewish church and because of it there would be a “fullness of blessing” on the Gentile field.)

Paul conceived of this collection as a source of much thanksgiving to God on the part of its recipients for the evidence of the effectiveness of the Gospel among the Gentiles. Cf. 2 Cor. 9:11-14, especially v 13. That he thought it would redound to the credit of the Gospel itself, wherever he went, seems most probable. For he boasted much among the Gentile churches about this matter (2 Cor. 9:1-4) as he sought to stir them to generosity, and the Apostle was a man who spoke freely and often of what God had wrought on the Gentile fields. No doubt, therefore, he would make it a talking point among Jews and Gentiles alike in Spain, that the Gospel could unite believers across tense racial lines with such expressions of love as this. He anticipated therefore God’s fullest “bounty” upon the Gospel in consequence, and it is of this anticipated blessing that he here speaks. Cf. John 13:35!

15:30. But this trip for such a ministry entailed serious problems for which prayer was urgently required. Paul appeals to his readers for this on two grounds: (1) through the Lord Jesus Christ

and (2) through the love of the Spirit. Here διὰ equals almost “by” and Paul is invoking the name of Christ and the Spirit’s love as a basis for their prayer interest. The AV rendering “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake” catches the idea. If they care about *Him* and *His* interests, they will pray for Paul His servant who seeks in fact God’s blessing upon Christ’s Gospel (cf. v 29). And if they do not repress the Spirit’s love, which ought naturally to be in their hearts, this too will be an irresistible reason for prayer. Love of Christ and love by His Spirit for others are thus the two great motivations for sharing the prayer needs of others even when (like the Romans in regard to Paul) we have had no direct personal contact with them. (Though many in Rome may have known him—cf. chapter 16—Paul still treats the church as a whole as a stranger to him (cf. 1:10-13).

And it is not simply casual prayer Paul seeks, but that intense and faithful prayer which is a form of spiritual wrestling (cf. συναγωνίσασθαι)—a spiritual combat against hostile powers whose opposition lies behind human opposition.

15:31-32. That human opposition was very real in Judea from unbelieving enemies of the Apostle, see Acts. But there was also possibly a danger that a kind of human pride might pose a potential threat to Jewish acceptance of this Gentile charity. This latter problem—easy to imagine—is only hinted at in the most indirect way by Paul’s words here. But apparently a “striving” in prayer was as needful that the ministry to the saints might be acceptable to them as it was needful in view of the unbelieving enemies. Indeed, our last glimpse of the Christian church in Jerusalem (Acts 21) shows a congregation much swayed by distorted reports about Paul and hence Paul’s concern for Jewish acceptance of the Gentile gift was well-founded.

Indeed the hostile spiritual forces with whom we wrestle in prayer may work through pride or legalism or other things in the hearts of fellow Christians as well as through the unbelief of the unsaved.

But if the prayers of the Romans are effectual, Paul will see these obstacles overcome and be able to come to Rome in joy and be refreshed there. Both results actually were achieved, but not in a fashion Paul could have anticipated. The harrowing experiences through which he passed between his arrival in Jerusalem and his arrival in Rome made the relief and joy of his arrival there at last very real indeed (Acts 28:15). Paul *did* come to them in joy διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ, but, as often, the experiences by which the will of God is accomplished are, to our vantage point, unique and unforeseen.

15:33. His wish for their peace is appropriate since they are asked to pray for his! And, indeed, those who concern themselves genuinely with the needs of others, and not merely with needs of their own, may be expected to find personal peace in far greater measure than the selfish and self-concerned.

CHAPTER 16

16:1. The Apostle now recommends to the care and assistance of the Roman Christians a woman who is a true model for dedicated believers. By the use of the three titles applied to her, Paul states the grounds on which she is worthy of the attentions of his readers.

She is first of all a *sister*, a member of that great Christian family which now knew no boundaries of race or culture or place. He can speak of her as *our sister*—the Romans', as well as his own.

But she was also a *servant* of the Christian church as Cenchrea. As a διάκονος she had entered upon that sphere of activity where alone true Christian greatness can be found (cf. ὁ διάκονων in Lk. 22:24-27). The word διάκονος also implies she was a deaconess in the Cenchrean assembly and thus probably, among other things, involved in table service related to the Lord's Supper. In this too, she would reflect the spirit of her Master (cf. Lk. 24:27).

16:2. Finally, she was a *succorer* of many, and of Paul himself. The word used here, προστάτις, is unique in the New Testament and implies the role of a patroness or perhaps more simply, one who looked after the affairs and interests of another.

Paul is probably thinking of the many services she has rendered to traveling Christians on business or, like himself, in the service of the Gospel. In a port city—Cenchrea, which served as a harbor for Corinth, she would have much occasion for assisting people like this—whether in acquiring suitable lodgings, or making needed contacts, or whatever the need. Consequently Paul feels it is only right that she receive similar assistance from the Roman Christians (παραστήτε and προστάτις even have a similar sound)—see Luke 6:38.

Her journey to Rome and reception by the saints (which is to be ἐν κυρίῳ and ἀξιῶς) adumbrates the journey of each Christian toward the New Jerusalem. In the kingdom to come our “reception” will be in accordance with what we are (as Phoebe's was to be), and if, like her, we are fruitful Christians, we will find an abundant entrance therein (cf. 2 Pet. 1:11). Membership in the family of God (sister) is the bare minimum for any entrance at all, but service to God's people collectively (servant of the church) and attention to their individual and private needs (succorer of many) can win an *abundant* entrance.

16:3-16. The Apostle now comes to the greetings which he wishes to extend to various believers in Rome. The section created by these greetings may, from one point of view, be viewed as an “abridged edition” of the book of life. All named here are believers whose names are also written in heaven and, because it is an eternal book, Romans will always contain these names as will the heavenly book itself.

Twenty-six distinct personal names may be counted in these verses (though a larger number of actual people are in view since reference is made to households and unnamed close relations). Yet of these, only ten—beginning with Aquila and Priscilla—are commended for their Christian life or service (cf. vv 3-5a; vv 6, 7, 9a, 10a, 12). So also when heaven's register is complete, not all will be worthy of divine commendation. Thus the Holy Spirit has here inspired a list of God's people which is, in effect, a true microcosm of the larger reality. Note in particular the gradation in vv 11b-12 from those who are “in the Lord” to those who “*labor* in the Lord” to one who “*labors much* in the Lord.” In like manner in God's family some are simply Christians, some are

laboring Christians and some labor *much*. God will acknowledge such distinctions in the age to come.

As Priscilla and Aquila head the list and are the most fulsomely praised by Paul, they furnish the finest examples of vital Christianity on the roster. Not only were they Paul's "fellow-workers, fellow-laborers in Christ Jesus," but a truly Christ-like spirit of sacrifice (cf. 1 John 3:16) had moved them to risk their lives for the Apostle's personal safety, resulting in the gratitude of many toward them for preserving so useful a servant's life. Even now, since they have returned to Rome, they continue to serve God by hosting a church in their home (cf. v 5a). By contrast, the names at the conclusion of the list are mere names (vv 14, 15) included because they are among the brethren and the saints at Rome.

16:17. A final exhortation is now included by the Apostle just before the close of his letter. Covering vv 17-20a, it constitutes a warning against those who either from within or without the churches at Rome, are the purveyors of false teaching.

Far from counseling unconcern with such problems, Paul urges that the Romans especially note (σκοπεῖν) those whose teachings are either divisive or productive of spiritual stumbling (τὰ σκάνδαλα) for the purpose that they might be avoided. There is little to be gained from any "interaction" with men who actively promulgate heresy.

16:18. The reason is that such individuals are, in reality, driven by various human "appetites" to which they do slave service (δουλεύουσιν is to be understood in the phrase ἀλλὰ τῇ ἑαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ), rather than to the Lord Jesus Christ. The κοιλίᾳ probably represents for Paul men's hunger for money, recognition, power over others, etc., which drives them to promote error. Obviously those so motivated (whether consciously or unconsciously) are so bereft of any real empathy with the truth that they are best shunned. (Similar thoughts occur in the pastorals: 2 Tim. 3:5; especially Titus 3:10; etc.). (It is possible, however, that the command of v 17, ἐκκλινάτε ἀπ' αὐτῶν, embraces also the possibility of ex-communication.)

Nevertheless, their persuasive language is seductive for the naive and unsuspecting (τῶν ἀκάκων), and in so saying the Apostle really continues a description of their depravity while, at the same time, warning against the danger of spiritual "simplicity."

16:19. However, though the danger is real from men of this type, Paul knows the Romans' reputation for obedience to the truth they have learned (cf. v 17, ἦν ὑμεῖς ἐμάθετε) and rejoices over them for it. For such obedience is a real shield against error—it is the unsubmitive heart that is most readily deluded. But beyond this basic obedience, Paul desires also a spiritual intelligence (σοφούς) about what is religiously good and the kind of unsophisticated (ἀκάκων) rejection of evil which is its proper counterpart. He seeks in them the same quality John found in his readers in 1 John 2:21.

16:20a. If their obedience continues accompanied by this kind of wisdom and simple rejection of error, then a great victory over Satan will be won. The conflict is real enough now, but God will one day conclude it, thus bringing peace (Ὁ...Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης) and will, as it were, compel Satan to feel their conquering heel. (For an analogous experience, cf. Joshua 10:24.) It is a vivid way of expressing their ultimate triumph through God over their Satanic foe whose agents the purveyors of heresy have become.

16:20b. A wish for grace for his readers is the characteristic way Paul has of concluding his Epistles. Only in Romans does the wish occur twice (vv 20b, 24). Paul may well have concluded the dictation of his letter with v 20b, but he evidently was being attended by a substantial number of auditors, and these may now have expressed the desire to greet the Roman Christians. Hence vv 21-23, after which Paul concludes the letter again with v 24. (Verses 25-27 are actually located elsewhere in most Mss.)

By this means the Holy Spirit has actually given us, in the persons named, specific illustrations of how Paul's twice expressed wish (which thus "frames" these names in the text) can be fulfilled in the lives of believers. For the individual names in vv 21-23 are *with* Paul and, in them, the grace of the Lord Jesus was *with* Paul. For as God's grace originally meets us in a *Person*, so it is *with* us in *persons* in whom that Person dwells.

16:21-23. Each individual represents, in what is said about them, a particular facet of God's grace as Paul was conscious of that grace.

In Timothy there is "ministerial grace" that made him a valued fellow-worker of the Apostle for which he doubtless thanked God often. In Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater is seen the "familial grace" of God that had touched Paul's clan (cf. also vv 7, 11). In Tertius is visible the "professional grace" of God by which the skills and talents are devoted to God's service, Paul being here a special beneficiary of Tertius' efforts. (Note that the Greek states that Tertius wrote the epistle ἐν Κυρίῳ, so that he was consciously laboring as a scribe for God.) In Gaius is seen the "hospitable grace" of God; in Erastus the "prominent grace" of God which touches something not many—of the prominent in this world (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-28, written to Erastus' church!); and in Quartus the "condescending grace" of God in making one who—by contrast with Erastus—evidently had no worldly importance into a brother in God's family. This is even more emphatically true if, as seems most probable, Quartus (= fourth and cf. Tertius = third) was the name of a slave in Gaius' household. (Slaves number three and four were on duty that day!) The title "brother" no doubt thrilled Paul as it did Quartus and, indeed, Paul had reason to find joy in each of those in the room and to see in them a blessing to himself of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ which was *with* him through them. (Timothy, Tertius, Gaius each *aided* Paul; no doubt the others *delighted* and *encouraged* him.)

16:24. Thus the repeated wish can now be seen, at least in part, as a desire that his readers might meet with grace just as he had!

16:25. (Romans 16:25-27 evidently belong after 14:23 and are designed as a doxology extolling God's power to establish believers, despite the spiritual weakness in 'doubtful' things which some exhibit (cf. 14:1, 2 and 15:1). Those who are thus established ought then to bear the weaknesses of others—15:1 ff.)

The power which God has to establish believers in their Christian experience works by means of (κατὰ) the Gospel Paul preaches (cf. 1:16!) which involves the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is probably a hendiadys for "my gospel of the preaching of (= about) Jesus Christ." Paul's Gospel focuses upon a Person and it is the Person of Jesus Christ (not "rules" about meat and drink and special days—cf. chapter 14—or about anything) that (who) holds the secret of Christian establishment. The heart focused upon the Christ of Paul's Gospel can find the needed spiritual strength (cf. Rom. 8).

But closely associated with this means by which God establishes believers is a second means. Note the repeated κατὰ, but without a connecting καὶ, which suggests that it is not so much a coordinate means, but rather a means which elaborates the first κατὰ phrase. That is, the Gospel Paul proclaims as a message about Christ involves a divine secret in accord with which (or, by means of which) God also establishes believers. The secret to which Paul refers is, of course, his well known teaching about the church, in which Gentiles find a place of equal privilege with Jews (cf. Eph. 3) and thus form a body which is united to Christ in the spiritual union of a spiritual marriage (cf. Eph. 5).

Paul, then, in v 25, is affirming that the Gospel of Christ in which there is now unfolded a secret kept in silence since God's program of the ages began (χρόνοις αἰωνίοις σεσιγημένου) is the means by which God is able to give believers needed spiritual establishment. Since v 26 continues to unfold the concept of the "mystery," it is plain that this holy secret is a crucial element in the establishing process. And indeed it is, for in Romans Paul dwells heavily on the truth of our spiritual union with Christ in His life as the *sine qua non* of Christian victory. The "mystery" is nothing less than the revelation of that union of believers—Jews and Gentiles—with their Savior. (For the relation of union with Christ to victory, cf. chapters 6-8.)

16:26. Now that the secret has been manifested, it is proclaimed world-wide to all the Gentiles (whose privileges it unfolds) and seeks to elicit the obedience of faith. The phrase εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως refers to the saving act of faith which is an obedience because the Gospel commands it. But "out of" this saving faith flows the life and strength of the man who is justified by it. "The just shall live by (or, 'out of') faith."

In the process of its being made known to the Gentiles, the mystery is now authenticated by prophetic scriptures. (Translate: "and by prophetic scriptures made known to all nations for the obedience of faith according to the commandment of the eternal God.") The reference to Scripture is not likely to be the New Testament Scriptures, at least not primarily, since Paul habitually seeks the support of the Old Testament for his doctrines. And indeed the mystery of the Church *is* to be found in the Old Testament, though hidden there—often in types—and not perceived by men until the Old Testament began to be read in the light of the cross and of the rejection of Messiah by Israel. But now the Scriptures reveal this hidden truth and God has commanded its proclamation throughout the world. (The reference to an ἐπιταγή here may also contain an allusion to the imperative which the Gospel imposes on its hearers among the Gentiles and which therefore demands faith as the proper obedient response.)

Paul in this verse is stressing the grand universal scope of this revealed secret, thus accentuating for his Roman readers the greatness of the truth God uses to establish them. By comparison, questions about food and drink are trivial issues. The spiritually strong (cf. 15:1, 2) can easily sacrifice such minor things if they grasp the true splendor of the relationship they have to God within the boundaries of this great revealed mystery. The weak, too, might well afford to look beyond the same trivial concerns to the larger truths that Paul desires they should appreciate—and thus, they could cease to be weak!

16:27. Obviously, the unique wisdom of God is seen in the truth Paul has referred to in this doxology and out of this great revelation of the divine wisdom toward men will come—through Jesus Christ upon whom it all focuses—God's great eternal glory.

Thus Paul has praised God in these verses, particularly in reference to what He is able to do in the lives of believers through truth which unfolds His own wisdom and glory, so that his Roman readers might have their eyes lifted above the parochial concerns which divide and trouble them in reference to meat and drink (chapter 14). This larger vision is their way to spiritual strength; for, by means of the truth here touched on, God *is able* (τῷ...δυνάμενω) to establish any of them.