

NOTES ON ST PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

MANY of the writings of the New Testament are written in the form of epistles. Such are not only those of St. Paul, James, Peter, Jude, but also both the treatises of St. Luke, and all the writings of St. John. Nay, we have seven epistles herein which the Lord Jesus himself sent by the hand of John to the seven churches; yea, the whole Rev. is no other than an epistle from Him. Concerning the epistles of St. Paul, we may observe, he writes in a very different manner to those churches which he had planted himself, and to those who had not seen his face in the flesh. In his letters to the former, a loving or sharp familiarity appears, as their behaviour was more or less suitable to the gospel. To the latter, he proposes the pure, unmixed gospel, in a more general and abstract manner. As to the time wherein he wrote his epistles, it is probable he wrote about the year of Christ, according to the common reckoning, 48 From Corinth, The Epistle to the Thessalonians. 49 From Phrygia, To the [Galatians](#). 52 From Ephesus, The First to the Corinthians. From Troas, The First Epistle to Timothy. From Macedonia, The Second to the Corinthians, and that to Titus. From Corinth, To the [Romans](#). 57 From Rome, To the Philippians, to Philemon, the Ephesians, and [Colossians](#). 53 From Italy, To the [Hebrews](#). 66 From Rome, The Second to Timothy. As to the general epistles, it seems, St. James wrote a little before his death, which was A. D. 63. St. Peter, who was martyred in the year 67, wrote his latter epistle a little before his death, and not long after his former. St. Jude wrote after him, when the mystery of iniquity was gaining ground swiftly. St. John is believed to have wrote all his epistles a little before his departure. The Revelation he wrote A. D. 96. That St. Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth we may learn from his commending to the Roman Phebe, a servant of the church of Cenchrea, chap. xvi, 1, a port of Corinth; and from his mentioning the salutations of Caius and Erastus, chap. xvi, 23, who were both Corinthians. Those to whom he wrote seem to have been chiefly foreigners, both Jews and gentiles, whom business drew from other provinces; as appears, both by his writing in Greek, and by his salutations of several former acquaintance. His chief design herein is to show,

1, That neither the gentiles by the law of nature, nor the Jews by the law of Moses, could obtain justification before God; and that therefore it was necessary for both to seek it from the free mercy of God by faith.

2, That God has an absolute right to show mercy on what terms he pleases, and to withhold it from those who will not accept it on his own terms. This Epistle consists of five parts: -

I. The introduction, C.i.1-15

II. The proposition briefly proved,

1. Concerning faith and justification,

2. Concerning salvation,

3. Concerning the equality of believers, Jews or gentiles, 16-17 To these three parts, whereof The first is treated of, C.i.18-iv. The second, C.v-viii. The

third, C.ix.-xi not only the treatise itself, but also the exhortation, answers in the same order.

III. The treatise,

1. Concerning justification, which is, (1.) Not by works, for C.i.18 The gentiles, C.ii.1-10 The Jews, and 11-29 Both together are under sin, C.iii.1-20 (2.) But by faith, 21-31 as appears by the example of Abraham, and the testimony of David, C.iv.1-25
2. Concerning salvation, C.v.-viii.
3. Concerning the equal privileges of Jewish and gentile believers, C.ix.-xi.

IV. The exhortation, C.xii.1-2

1. Concerning faith and its fruits, love and practical holiness, 3-21 C.xiii.1-10
2. Concerning salvation, 11-14
3. Of the conjunction of Jews and gentiles,. C.xiv.1-xv.13

V. The conclusion, 14-xvi.25 To express the design and contents of this epistle a little more at large: The apostle labours throughout to fix in those to whom he writes a deep sense of the excellency of the gospel, and to engage them to act suitably to it. For this purpose, after a general salutation, chap. i, 1-7, and profession of his affection for them, chap. i, 8-15, he declares he shall not be ashamed openly to maintain the gospel at Rome, seeing it is the powerful instrument of salvation, both to Jews and gentiles, by means of faith, chap. i, 16, 17. And, in order to demonstrate this, he shows,

1. That the world greatly needed such a dispensation, the gentiles being in a most abandoned state, chap. i, 18-32, and the Jews, though condemning others, being themselves no better, chap. ii, 1- 29; as, notwithstanding some cavils, which he obviates, chap. iii, 1-8, their own scriptures testify, chap. iii, 9-19. So that all were under a necessity of seeking justification by this method, chap. iii, 20-31.
2. That Abraham and David themselves sought justification by faith, and not by works, chap. iv, 1-25.
3. That all who believe are brought into so happy a state, as turns the greatest afflictions into a matter of joy, chap. v, 1-11.
4. That the evils brought on mankind by Adam are abundantly recompensed to all that believe in Christ, chap. v, 12-21.
5. That, far from dissolving the obligations to practical holiness, the gospel increases them by peculiar obligations, chap. vi, 1-23. In order to convince them of these things the more deeply, and to remove their fondness for the Mosaic law, now they were married to Christ by faith in him, chap. vii, 1-6, he shows how unable the motives of the law were to produce that holiness

which believers obtain by a living faith in the gospel, chap. vii, 7-25, viii, 1, 2, and then gives a more particular view of those things which rendered the gospel effectual to this great end, chap. viii, 3-39. That even the gentiles, if they believed, should have a share in these blessings, and that the Jews, if they believed not, should be excluded from them, being a point of great importance, the apostle bestows the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters in settling it. He begins the ninth chapter by expressing his tender love and high esteem for the Jewish nation, chap. ix, 1-5, and then shows,

1. That God's rejecting great part of the seed of Abraham, yea, and of Isaac too, was undeniable fact, chap. ix, 6-13.
2. That God had not chosen them to such peculiar privileges for any kind of goodness either in them or their fathers, chap. ix, 14- 24.
3. That his accepting the gentiles, and rejecting many of the Jews, had been foretold both by Hosea and Isaiah, chap. ix, 25-33.
4. That God had offered salvation to Jews and gentiles on the same terms, though the Jews had rejected it, chap. x, 1-21.
5. That though the rejection of Israel for their obstinacy was general, yet it was not total; there being still a remnant among them who did embrace the gospel, chap. xi, 1-10.
6. That the rejection of the rest was not final, but in the end all Israel should be saved, chap. xi, 11-31.
7. That, meantime, even their obstinacy and rejection served to display the unsearchable wisdom and love of God, chap. xi, 32- 36. The rest of the epistle contains practical instructions and exhortations. He particularly urges,
 1. An entire consecration of themselves to God, and a care to glorify Him by a faithful improvement of their several talents, chap. vii, 1-11.
 2. Devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peace, and meekness, chap. vii, 12-21.
 3. Obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, love the fulfilling of the law, and universal holiness, chap. viii, 1-14.
 4. Mutual candour between those who differed in judgment, touching the observance of the Mosaic law, chap. xiv, 1-23, xv, 1- 17; in enforcing which he is led to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purpose of visiting the Romans; in the mean time recommending himself to their prayers, chap. xv, 18-33. And, after many salutations, chap. xvi, 1-16, and a caution against those who caused divisions, he concludes with a suitable blessing and doxology, chap. xvi, 17-27.

ROMANS

I

1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ - To this introduction the conclusion answers, chap. xv, 15, &c. Called to be an apostle - And made an apostle by that calling. While God calls, he makes what he calls. As the Judaizing teachers disputed his claim to the apostolical office, it is with great propriety that he asserts it in the very entrance of an epistle wherein their principles are entirely overthrown. And various other proper and important thoughts are suggested in this short introduction; particularly the prophecies concerning the gospel, the descent of Jesus from David, the great doctrines of his Godhead and resurrection, the sending the gospel to the gentiles, the privileges of Christians, and the obedience and holiness to which they were obliged in virtue of their profession. Separated - By God, not only from the bulk of other men, from other Jews, from other disciples, but even from other Christian teachers, to be a peculiar instrument of God in spreading the gospel.

2. Which he promised before - Of old time, frequently, solemnly. And the promise and accomplishment confirm each other. [Deut. xviii, 18](#); [Isa. ix, 6, 7](#); Chapter liii; lxi; [Jer. xxxiii, 5](#).

3. Who was of the seed of David according to the flesh - That is, with regard to his human nature. Both the natures of our saviour are here mentioned; but the human is mentioned first, because the divine was not manifested in its full evidence till after his resurrection.

4. But powerfully declared to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of Holiness - That is, according to his divine nature. By the resurrection from the dead - For this is both the fountain and the object of our faith; and the preaching of the apostles was the consequence of Christ's resurrection.

5. By whom we have received - I and the other apostles. Grace and apostleship - The favour to be an apostle, and qualifications for it. For obedience to the faith in all nations - That is, that all nations may embrace the faith of Christ. For his name - For his sake; out of regard to him.

6. Among whom - The nations brought to the obedience of faith. Are ye also - But St. Paul gives them no preeminence above others.

7. To all that are in Rome - Most of these were heathens by birth, ver. 13, though with Jews mixed among them. They were scattered up and down in that large city, and not yet reduced into the form of a church. Only some had begun to meet in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Beloved of God - And from his free love, not from any merit of yours, called by his word and his Spirit to believe in him, and now through faith holy as he is holy. Grace - The peculiar favour of God. And peace - All manner of blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. This is both a Christian salutation and an apostolic benediction. From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ - This is the usual way wherein the apostles speak, "God the Father," "God our Father." Nor do they often, in speaking of him, use the word Lord, as it implies the proper name of God, Jehovah. In the Old Testament, indeed, the holy men

generally said, "The Lord our God;" for they were then, as it were, servants; whereas now they are sons: and sons so well know their father, that they need not frequently mention his proper name. It is one and the same peace, and one and the same grace, which is from God and from Jesus Christ. Our trust and prayer fix on God, as he is the Father of Christ; and on Christ, as he presents us to the Father.

8. I thank - In the very entrance of this one epistle are the traces of all spiritual affections; but of thankfulness above all, with the expression of which almost all St. Paul's epistles begin. He here particularly thanks God, that what otherwise himself should have done, was done at Rome already. My God - This very word expresses faith, hope, love, and consequently all true religion. Through Jesus Christ - The gifts of God all pass through Christ to us; and all our petitions and thanksgivings pass through Christ to God. That your faith is spoken of - In this kind of congratulations St. Paul describes either the whole of Christianity, as [Colossians i, 3](#), &c.; or some part of it, as [1 Cor. i, 5](#). Accordingly here he mentions the faith of the Romans, suitably to his design, ver. 12, 17. Through the whole world - This joyful news spreading everywhere, that there were Christians also in the imperial city. And the goodness and wisdom of God established faith in the chief cities; in Jerusalem and Rome particularly; that from thence it might be diffused to all nations.

9. God, whom I serve - As an apostle. In my spirit - Not only with my body, but with my inmost soul. In the gospel - By preaching it.

10. Always - In all my solemn addresses to God. If by any means now at length - This accumulation of particles declares the strength of his desire.

11. That I may impart to you - Face to face, by laying on of hands, prayer, preaching the gospel, private conversation. Some spiritual gift - With such gifts the Corinthians, who had enjoyed the presence of St. Paul, abounded, [1 Cor. i, 7](#); [xii, 1](#); [xiv, 1](#). So did the Galatians likewise, [Gal. iii, 5](#); and, indeed, all those churches which had had the presence of any of the apostles had peculiar advantages in this kind, from the laying on of their hands, [Acts xix, 6](#); [viii, 17](#), &c., [2 Tim. i, 6](#). But as yet the Roman were greatly inferior to them in this respect; for which reason the apostle, in the twelfth chapter also, says little, if any thing, of their spiritual gifts. He therefore desires to impart some, that they might be established; for by these was the testimony of Christ confirmed among them. That St. Peter had no more been at Rome than St. Paul, at the time when this epistle was written, appears from the general tenor thereof, and from this place in particular: for, otherwise, what St. Paul wishes to impart to the Roman would have been imparted already by St. Peter.

12. That is, I long to be comforted by the mutual faith both of you and me - He not only associates the Roman with, but even prefers them before, himself. How different is this style of the apostle from that of the modern court of Rome!

13. Brethren - A frequent, holy, simple, sweet, and yet grand, appellation. The apostles but rarely address persons by their names; 'O ye Corinthians,' "O Timotheus." St. Paul

generally uses this appellation, " Brethren;" sometimes in exhortation, " My beloved," or, " My beloved brethren;" St. James, "Brethren," "My brethren," My beloved brethren;" St. Peter and Jude always, " Beloved;" St. John frequently, " Beloved;" once, " Brethren;" oftener than once, My little children." Though I have been hindered hitherto - Either by business, see chap. xv, 22; or persecution, [1 Thess. ii, 2](#); or the Spirit, [Acts xvi, 7](#). That I might have some fruit - Of my ministerial labours. Even as I have already had from the many churches I have planted and watered among the other gentiles.

14. To the Greeks and the barbarians - He includes the Roman under the Greeks; so that this division comprises all nations. Both to the wise, and the unwise - For there were unwise even among the Greeks, and wise even among the barbarians. I am a debtor to all - I am bound by my divine mission to preach the gospel to them.

16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel - To the world, indeed, it is folly and weakness, [1 Cor. i, 18](#); therefore, in the judgment of the world, he ought to be ashamed of it; especially at Rome, the head and theatre of the world. But Paul is not ashamed, knowing it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth - The great and gloriously powerful means of saving all who accept salvation in God's own way. As St. Paul comprises the sum of the gospel in this epistle, so he does the sum of the epistle in this and the following verse. Both to the Jew, and to the gentile - There is a noble frankness, as well as a comprehensive sense, in these words, by which he, on the one hand, shows the Jews their absolute need of the gospel; and, on the other, tells the politest and greatest nation in the world both that their salvation depended on receiving it, and that the first offers of it were in every place to be made to the despised Jews.

17. The righteousness of God - This expression sometimes means God's eternal, essential righteousness, which includes both justice and mercy, and is eminently shown in condemning sin, and yet justifying the sinner. Sometimes it means that righteousness by which a man, through the gift of God, is made and is righteous; and that, both by receiving Christ through faith, and by a conformity to the essential righteousness of God. St. Paul, when treating of justification, means hereby the righteousness of faith; therefore called the righteousness of God, because God found out and prepared, reveals and gives, approves and crowns it. In this verse the expression means, the whole benefit of God through Christ for the salvation of a sinner. Is revealed - Mention is made here, and ver. 18, of a twofold Revelation, - of wrath and of righteousness: the former, little known to nature, is revealed by the law; the latter, wholly unknown to nature, by the gospel. That goes before, and prepares the way; this follows. Each, the apostle says, is revealed at the present time, in opposition to the times of ignorance. From faith to faith - By a gradual series of still clearer and clearer promises. As it is written - St. Paul had just laid down three propositions:

1. Righteousness is by faith, ver. xvii,
2. Salvation is by righteousness, ver. xvi,

3. Both to the Jews and to the gentiles, ver. 16. Now all these are confirmed by that single sentence, The just shall live by faith - Which was primarily spoken of those who preserved their lives, when the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem, by believing the declarations of God, and acting according to them. Here it means, He shall obtain the favour of God, and continue therein by believing. [Hab. ii, 4](#)

18. For - There is no other way of obtaining life and salvation. Having laid down his proposition, the apostle now enters upon the proof of it. His first argument is, The law condemns all men, as being under sin. None therefore is justified by the works of the law. This is treated of chap. iii, 20. And hence he infers, Therefore justification is by faith. The wrath of God is revealed - Not only by frequent and signal interpositions of divine providence, but likewise in the sacred oracles, and by us, his messengers. From heaven - This speaks the majesty of Him whose wrath is revealed, his all-seeing eye, and the extent of his wrath: whatever is under heaven is under the effects of his wrath, believers in Christ excepted. Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness - These two are treated of, ver. 23, &c. Of men - He is speaking here of the gentiles, and chiefly the wisest of them. Who detain the truth - For it struggles against their wickedness. In unrighteousness - The word here includes ungodliness also.

19. For what is to be known of God - Those great principles which are indispensably necessary to be known. Is manifest in them; for God hath showed it to them - By the light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

20. For those things of him which are invisible, are seen - By the eye of the mind. Being understood - They are seen by them, and them only, who use their understanding

21. Because, knowing God - For the wiser heathens did know that there was one supreme God; yet from low and base considerations they conformed to the idolatry of the vulgar. They did not glorify him as God, neither were thankful - They neither thanked him for his benefits, nor glorified him for his divine perfection. But became vain - Like the idols they worshipped. In their reasonings - Various, uncertain, foolish. What a terrible instance have we of this in the writings of Lucretius! What vain reasonings, and how dark a heart, amidst so pompous professions of wisdom!

23. And changed - With the utmost folly. Here are three degrees of ungodliness and of punishment: the first is described, ver. 21- 24; the second, ver. 25-27; the third, in ver. 28, and following verses. The punishment in each case is expressed by God gave them up. If a man will not worship God as God, he is so left to himself that he throws away his very manhood. Reptiles - Or creeping things; as beetles, and various kinds of serpents.

24. Wherefore - One punishment of sin is from the very nature of it, as ver. 27; another, as here, is from vindictive justice. Uncleaness - Ungodliness and uncleaness are frequently

joined, [1 Thess. iv, 5](#) as are the knowledge of God and purity. God gave them up - By withdrawing his restraining grace.

25. Who changed the truth - The true worship of God. Into a lie - False, abominable idolatries. And worshipped - Inwardly. And served - Outwardly.

26. Therefore God gave them up to vile affections - To which the heathen Roman were then abandoned to the last degree; and none more than the emperors themselves.

27. Receiving the just recompense of their error - Their idolatry being punished with that unnatural lust, which was as horrible a dishonour to the body, as their idolatry was to God.

28. God gave them up to an undiscerning mind - Treated of, ver. 32. To do things not expedient - Even the vilest abominations, treated of ver. 29-31.

29. Filled with all injustice - This stands in the first place; unmercifulness, in the last. Fornication - Includes here every species of uncleanness. Maliciousness - The Greek word properly implies a temper which delights in hurting another, even without any advantage to itself.

30. Whisperers - Such as secretly defame others. Backbiters - Such as speak against others behind their back. Haters of God - That is, rebels against him, deniers of his providence, or accusers of his justice in their adversities; yea, having an inward heart-enmity to his justice and holiness. Inventors of evil things - Of new pleasures, new ways of gain, new arts of hurting, particularly in war.

31. Covenant-breakers - It is well known, the Romans, as a nation, from the very beginning of their commonwealth, never made any scruple of vacating altogether the most solemn engagement, if they did not like it, though made by their supreme magistrate, in the name of the whole people. They only gave up the general who had made it, and then supposed themselves to be at full liberty. Without natural affection - The custom of exposing their own new-born children to perish by cold, hunger, or wild beasts, which so generally prevailed in the heathen world, particularly among the Greeks and Romans, was an amazing instance of this; as is also that of killing their aged and helpless parents, now common among the American heathens.

32. Not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that practice them - This is the highest degree of wickedness. A man may be hurried by his passions to do the thing he hates; but he that has pleasure in those that do evil, loves wickedness for wickedness' sake. And hereby he encourages them in sin, and heaps the guilt of others upon his own head.

II

1. Therefore - The apostle now makes a transition from the gentiles to the Jews, till, at ver. 6, he comprises both. Thou art inexcusable - Seeing knowledge without practice only increases guilt. O man - Having before spoken of the gentile in the third person, he addresses the Jew in the second person. But he calls him by a common appellation, as not acknowledging him to be a Jew. See verses 17, 28. Whosoever thou art that Judgest - Censurest, condemnest. For in that thou Judgest the other - The heathen. Thou condemnest thyself; for thou doest the same things - In effect; in many instances.

2. For we know - Without thy teaching That the judgment of God - Not thine, who exceptest thyself from its sentence. Is according to truth - Is just, making no exception, ver. 5, 6, 11; and reaches the heart as well as the life, ver. 16.

3. That thou shalt escape - Rather than the gentile.

4. Or despisest thou - Dost thou go farther still, - from hoping to escape his wrath, to the abuse of his love?. The riches - The abundance. Of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering - Seeing thou both hast sinned, dost sin, and wilt sin. All these are afterwards comprised in the single word goodness. Leadeth thee - That is, is designed of God to lead or encourage thee to it.

5. Treasurest up wrath - Although thou thinkest thou art treasuring up all good things. O what a treasure may a man lay up either way, in this short day of life! To thyself - Not to him whom thou Judgest. In the day of wrath, and Revelation, and righteous judgment of God - Just opposite to "the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering" of God. When God shall be revealed, then shall also be "revealed" the secrets of men's hearts, ver. 16. Forbearance and Revelation respect God, and are opposed to each other; longsuffering and righteous judgment respect the sinner; goodness and wrath are words of a more general import.

6. [Prov. xxiv, 12](#)

7. To them that seek for glory - For pure love does not exclude faith, hope, desire, [1 Cor. xv, 58](#).

8. But to them that are contentious - Like thee, O Jew, who thus fightest against God. The character of a false Jew is disobedience, stubbornness, impatience. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish - Alluding to Psalm lxxviii, xlix, "He cast upon them," the Egyptians. "the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble;" and finely intimating, that the Jews would in the day of vengeance be more severely punished than even the Egyptians were when God made their plagues so wonderful.

9. Of the Jew first - Here we have the first express mention of the Jews in this chapter. And it is introduced with great propriety. Their having been trained up in the true religion, and having had Christ and his apostles first sent to them, will place them in the foremost rank of the criminals that obey not the truth.

10. But glory - Just opposite to "wrath," from the divine approbation. honour - Opposite to "indignation," by the divine appointment; and peace now and forever, opposed to tribulation and anguish.

11. For there is no respect of persons with God - He will reward every one according to his works. But this is well consistent with his distributing advantages and opportunities of improvement, according to his own good pleasure.

12. For as many as have sinned - He speaks as of the time past, for all time will be past at the day of judgment. Without the law - Without having any written law. Shall also perish without the law - Without regard had to any outward law; being condemned by the law written in their hearts. The word also shows the agreement of the manner of sinning, with the manner of suffering. Perish - He could not so properly say, Shall be judged without the law.

13. For not the hearers of the law are, even now, just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified - Finally acquitted and rewarded a most sure and important truth, which respects the gentiles also, though principally the Jews. St. Paul speaks of the former, ver. 14, &c.; of the latter, ver. 17, &c. Here is therefore no parenthesis; for the sixteenth verse also depends on the fifteenth, not on the twelfth. [Rom. ii, 16, 15, 12.](#)

14. For when the gentiles - That is, any of them. St. Paul, having refuted the perverse judgment of the Jews concerning the heathens, proceeds to show the just judgment of God against them. He now speaks directly of the heathens, in order to convince the heathens. Yet the concession he makes to these serves more strongly to convince the Jews. Do by nature - That is, without an outward rule; though this also, strictly speaking, is by preventing grace. The things contained in the law - The ten commandments being only the substance of the law of nature. These, not having the written law, are a law unto themselves - That is, what the law is to the Jews, they are, by the grace of God, to themselves; namely, a rule of life.

15. Who show - To themselves, to other men, and, in a sense, to God himself. The work of the law - The substance, though not the letter, of it. Written on their hearts - By the same hand which wrote the commandments on the tables of stone. Their conscience - There is none of all its faculties which the soul has less in its power than this. Bearing witness - In a trial there are the plaintiff, the defendant, and the witnesses. Conscience and sin itself are witnesses against the heathens. Their thoughts sometimes excuse, sometimes condemn, them. Among themselves - Alternately, like plaintiff and defendant. Accusing or even defending them - The very manner of speaking shows that they have far more room to accuse than to defend.

16. In the day - That is, who show this in the day. Everything will then be shown to be what it really is. In that day will appear the law written in their hearts as it often does in the present life. When God shall judge the secrets of men - On secret circumstances depends

the real quality of actions, frequently unknown to the actors themselves, ver. 29. Men generally form their judgments, even of themselves merely from what is apparent. According to my gospel - According to the tenor of that gospel which is committed to my care. Hence it appears that the gospel also is a law.

17. But if thou art called a Jew - This highest point of Jewish glorying, after a farther description of it interposed, ver. 17-20, and refuted, ver. 21-24, is itself refuted, ver. 25, &c. The description consists of twice five articles; of which the former five, ver. 17, 18, show what he boasts of in himself; the other five, ver. 19, 20, what he glories in with respect to others. The first particular of the former five answers to the first of the latter; the second, to the second, and so on. And retest in the law - Dependest on it, though it can only condemn thee. And gloriest in God - As thy God; and that, too, to the exclusion of others.

19. Blind, in darkness, ignorant, babes - These were the titles which the Jews generally gave the gentiles.

20. Having the form of knowledge and truth - That is, the most accurate knowledge of the truth.

21. Thou dost not teach thyself - He does not teach himself who does not practice what he teaches. Dost thou steal, commit adultery, commit sacrilege - Sin grievously against thy neighbour, thyself, God. St. Paul had shown the gentiles, first their sins against God, then against themselves, then against their neighbours. He now inverts the order: for sins against God are the most glaring in an heathen, but not in a Jew. Thou that abhorrest idols - Which all the Jews did, from the time of the Babylonish captivity. Thou committest sacrilege - Doest what is worse, robbing Him "who is God over all" of the glory which is due to him. None of these charges were rashly advanced against the Jews of that age; for, as their own historian relates, some even of the priests lived by rapine, and others in gross uncleanness. And as for sacrilegiously robbing God and his altar, it had been complained of ever since Malachi; so that the instances are given with great propriety and judgment.

24. [Isaiah lii, 5](#)

25. Circumcision indeed profiteth - He does not say, justifies. How far it profited is shown in the third and fourth chapters. Thy circumcision is become uncircumcision - is so already in effect. Thou wilt have no more benefit by it than if thou hadst never received it. The very same observation holds with regard to baptism.

26. If the uncircumcision - That is, a person uncircumcised. Keep the law - Walk agreeably to it. Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision - In the sight of God?

27. Yea, the uncircumcision that is by nature - Those who are, literally speaking, uncircumcised. Fulfilling the law - As to the substance of it. Shall judge thee - Shall condemn thee in that day. Who by the letter and circumcision - Who having the bare, literal, external circumcision, transgresseth the law.

28. For he is not a Jew - In the most important sense, that is, one of God's beloved people. Who is one in outward show only; neither is that the true, acceptable circumcision, which is apparent in the flesh.

29. But he is a Jew - That is, one of God's people. Who is one inwardly - In the secret recesses of his soul. And the acceptable circumcision is that of the heart - Referring to [Deut. xxx, 6](#); the putting away all inward impurity. This is seated in the spirit, the inmost soul, renewed by the Spirit of God. And not in the letter - Not in the external ceremony. Whose praise is not from men, but from God - The only searcher of the heart.

III

1. What then, may some say, is the advantage of the Jew, or of the circumcision - That is, those that are circumcised, above the gentiles?

2. Chiefly in that they were intrusted with the oracles of God - The scriptures, in which are so great and precious promises. Other prerogatives will follow, chap. ix, 4-5. St. Paul here singles out this by which, after removing the objection, he will convict them so much the more.

3. Shall their unbelief disannul the faithfulness of God - Will he not still make good his promises to them that do believe?

4. [Psalm ii, 4.](#)

5. But, it may be farther objected, if our unrighteousness be subservient to God's glory, is it not unjust in him to punish us for it? I speak as a man - As human weakness would be apt to speak.

6. God forbid - By no means. If it were unjust in God to punish that unrighteousness which is subservient to his own glory, how should God judge the world - Since all the unrighteousness in the world will then commend the righteousness of God.

7. But, may the objector reply, if the truth of God hath abounded - Has been more abundantly shown. Through my lie - If my lie, that is, practice contrary to truth, conduces to the glory of God, by making his truth shine with superior advantage. Why am I still judged as a sinner - Can this be said to be any sin at all? Ought I not to do what would otherwise be evil, that so much "good may come?" To this the apostle does not deign to give a direct answer, but cuts the objector short with a severe reproof.

8. Whose condemnation is just - The condemnation of all who either speak or act in this manner. So the apostle absolutely denies the lawfulness of "doing evil," any evil, "that good may come."

9. What then - Here he resumes what he said, verse 1. [Rom. iii, 1.](#) Under sin - Under the guilt and power of it: the Jews, by transgressing the written law; the gentiles, by transgressing the law of nature.

10. As it is written - That all men are under sin appears from the vices which have raged in all ages. St. Paul therefore rightly cites David and Isaiah, though they spoke primarily of their own age, and expressed what manner of men God sees, when he "looks down from heaven;" not what he makes them by his grace. There is none righteous - This is the general proposition. The particulars follow: their dispositions and designs, ver. 11, 12; their discourse, ver. 13, 14; their actions, ver. 16-18. [Psalm xiv, 1](#), &c.

11. There is none that understandeth - The things of God.

12. They have all turned aside - From the good way. They are become unprofitable - Helpless impotent, unable to profit either themselves or others.

13. Their throat - Is noisome and dangerous as an open sepulchre. Observe the progress of evil discourse, proceeding out of the heart, through the throat, tongue, lips, till the whole mouth is filled therewith. The poison of asps - Infectious, deadly backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking, is under (for honey is on) their lips. An asp is a venomous kind of serpent. [Psalm v, 9](#); [Psalm cxl, 3](#).

14. Cursing - Against God. Bitterness - Against their neighbour. [Psalm x, 7](#).

15. [Isaiah lix, 7, 8](#)

17. Of peace - Which can only spring from righteousness.

18. The fear of God is not before their eyes - Much less is the love of God in their heart. [Psalm xxxvi, 1](#).

19. Whatsoever the law - The Old Testament. Saith, it saith to them that are under the law - That is, to those who own its authority; to the Jews, and not the gentiles. St. Paul quoted no scripture against them, but pleaded with them only from the light of nature. Every mouth - Full of bitterness, ver. 14, and yet of boasting, ver. 27. May become guilty - May be fully convicted, and apparently liable to most just condemnation. These things were written of old, and were quoted by St. Paul, not to make men criminal, but to prove them so.

20. No flesh shall be justified - None shall be forgiven and accepted of God. By the works of the law - On this ground, that he hath kept the law. St. Paul means chiefly the moral part of it, ver. 9, 19 chap. ii, 21,

26; &c. which alone is not abolished, ver. 31. And it is not without reason, that he so often mentions the works of the law, whether ceremonial or moral; for it was on these only the Jews relied, being wholly ignorant of those that spring from faith. For by the law is only the knowledge of sin - But no deliverance either from the guilt or power of it.

21. But now the righteousness of God - That is, the manner of becoming righteous which God hath appointed. Without the law - Without that previous obedience which the law requires; without reference to the law, or dependence on it. Is manifested - In the gospel. Being attested by the Law itself, and by the Prophets - By all the promises in the Old Testament.

22. To all - The Jews. And upon all - The gentiles That believe: for there is no difference - Either as to the need of justification, or the manner of it.

23. For all have sinned - In Adam, and in their own persons; by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and sinful actions. And are fallen short of the glory of God - The supreme end of man; short of his image on earth, and the enjoyment of him in heaven.

24. And are justified - Pardoned and accepted. Freely - Without any merit of their own. By his grace - Not their own righteousness or works. Through the redemption - The price Christ has paid. Freely by his grace - One of these expressions might have served to convey the apostle's meaning; but he doubles his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth, and to impress us with a sense of its peculiar importance. It is not possible to

find words that should more absolutely exclude all consideration of our own works and obedience, or more emphatically ascribe the whole of our justification to free, unmerited goodness.

25. Whom God hath set forth - Before angels and men. A propitiation - To appease an offended God. But if, as some teach, God never was offended, there was no need of this propitiation. And, if so, Christ died in vain. To declare his righteousness - To demonstrate not only his clemency, but his justice; even that vindictive justice whose essential character and principal office is, to punish sin. By the remission of past sins - All the sins antecedent to their believing.

26. For a demonstration of his righteousness - Both of his justice and mercy. That he might be just - Showing his justice on his own Son. And yet the merciful justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. That he might be just - Might evidence himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous in the administration of his government, even while he is the merciful justifier of the sinner that believeth in Jesus. The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate; and inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our saviour. On this plan all the attributes harmonize; every attribute is glorified, and not one superseded no, nor so much as clouded.

27. Where is the boasting then of the Jew against the gentile? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay - This would have left room for boasting. But by the law of faith - Since this requires all, without distinction, to apply as guilty and helpless sinners, to the free mercy of God in Christ. The law of faith is that divine constitution which makes faith, not works, the condition of acceptance.

28. We conclude then that a man is justified by faith - And even by this, not as it is a work, but as it receives Christ; and, consequently, has something essentially different from all our works whatsoever.

29. Surely of the gentiles also - As both nature and the scriptures show.

30. Seeing it is one God who - Shows mercy to both, and by the very same means.

31. We establish the law - Both the authority, purity, and the end of it; by defending that which the law attests; by pointing out Christ, the end of it; and by showing how it may be fulfilled in its purity.

IV

Having proved it by argument, he now proves by example, and such example as must have greater weight with the Jews than any other.

1. That justification is by faith:

2. That it is free for the gentiles.

1. That our father Abraham hath found - Acceptance with God. According to the flesh - That is, by works.

2. The meaning is, If Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had room to glory. But he had not room to glory. Therefore he was not justified by works.

3. Abraham believed God - That promise of God concerning the numerousness of his seed, [Gen. xv, 5, 7](#); but especially the promise concerning Christ, [Gen. xii, 3](#), through whom all nations should be blessed. And it was imputed to him for righteousness - God accepted him as if he had been altogether righteous. [Gen. xv, 6](#).

4. Now to him that worketh - All that the law requires, the reward is no favour, but an absolute debt. These two examples are selected and applied with the utmost judgment and propriety. Abraham was the most illustrious pattern of piety among the Jewish patriarchs. David was the most eminent of their kings. If then neither of these was justified by his own obedience, if they both obtained acceptance with God, not as upright beings who might claim it, but as sinful creatures who must implore it, the consequence is glaring. It is such as must strike every attentive understanding, and must affect every individual person.

5. But to him that worketh not - It being impossible he should without faith. But believeth, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness - Therefore God's affirming of Abraham, that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, plainly shows that he worked not; or, in other words, that he was not justified by works, but by faith only. Hence we see plainly how groundless that opinion is, that holiness or sanctification is previous to our justification. For the sinner, being first convinced of his sin and danger by the Spirit of God, stands trembling before the awful tribunal of divine justice; and has nothing to plead, but his own guilt, and the merits of a Mediator. Christ here interposes; justice is satisfied; the sin is remitted, and pardon is applied to the soul, by a divine faith wrought by the Holy Ghost, who then begins the great work of inward sanctification. Thus God justifies the ungodly, and yet remains just, and true to all his attributes! But let none hence presume to "continue in sin;" for to the impenitent, God "is a consuming fire." On him that justifieth the ungodly - If a man could possibly be made holy before he was justified, it would entirely set his justification aside; seeing he could not, in the very nature of the thing, be justified if he were not, at that very time, ungodly.

6. So David also - David is fitly introduced after Abraham, because he also received and delivered down the promise. Affirmeth - A man is justified by faith alone, and not by works.

Without works-That is, without regard to any former good works supposed to have been done by him.

7. Happy are they whose sins are covered - With the veil of divine mercy. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on earth, it is the portion of that man whose iniquities are forgiven, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure all the afflictions of life with cheerfulness, and look upon death with comfort. O let us not contend against it, but earnestly pray that this happiness may be ours! [Psalm xxxii, 1, 2.](#)

9. This happiness - Mentioned by Abraham and David. On the circumcision - Those that are circumcised only. Faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness - This is fully consistent with our being justified, that is, pardoned and accepted by God upon our believing, for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered. For though this, and this alone, be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be "imputed to us for righteousness," as it is the sole condition of our acceptance. We may observe here, forgiveness, not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness, are all one.

10. Not in circumcision - Not after he was circumcised; for he was justified before Ishmael was born, [Gen. xv, 1-21](#); but he was not circumcised till Ishmael was thirteen years old, [Gen. xvii, 25.](#)

11. And - After he was justified. He received the sign of circumcision - Circumcision, which was a sign or token of his being in covenant with God. A seal - An assurance on God's part, that he accounted him righteous, upon his believing, before he was circumcised. Who believe in uncircumcision - That is, though they are not circumcised.

12. And the father of the circumcision - Of those who are circumcised, and believe as Abraham did. To those who believe not, Abraham is not a father, neither are they his seed.

13. The promise, that he should be the heir of the world - Is the same as that he should be "the father of all nations," namely, of those in all nations who receive the blessing. The whole world was promised to him and them conjointly. Christ is the heir of the world, and of all things; and so are all Abraham's seed, all that believe in him with the faith of Abraham

14. If they only who are of the law - Who have kept the whole law. Are heirs, faith is made void - No blessing being to be obtained by it; and so the promise is of no effect.

15. Because the law - Considered apart from that grace, which though it was in fact mingled with it, yet is no part of the legal dispensation, is so difficult, and we so weak and sinful, that, instead of bringing us a blessing, it only worketh wrath; it becomes to us an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors. Where there is no law in force, there can be no transgression of it.

16. Therefore it - The blessing. Is of faith, that it might be of grace - That it might appear to flow from the free love of God, and that the promise might be firm, sure, and effectual, to all the spiritual seed of Abraham; not only Jews, but gentiles also, if they follow his faith.

17. Before God - Though before men nothing of this appeared, those nations being then unborn. As quickening the dead - The dead are not dead to him and even the things that are not, are before God. And calling the things that are not - Summoning them to rise into being, and appear before him. The seed of Abraham did not then exist; yet God said, "So shall thy seed be." A man can say to his servant actually existing, Do this; and he doeth it: but God saith to the light, while it does not exist, Go forth; and it goeth. [Gen. xvii, 5](#). 18-21. The Apostle shows the power and excellence of that faith to which he ascribes justification. Who against hope - Against all probability, believed and hoped in the promise. The same thing is apprehended both by faith and hope; by faith, as a thing which God has spoken; by hope, as a good thing which God has promised to us. So shall thy seed be - Both natural and spiritual, as the stars of heaven for multitude. [Gen. xv, 5](#).

23. On his account only - To do personal honour to him.

24. But on ours also - To establish us in seeking justification by faith, and not by works; and to afford a full answer to those who say that, "to be justified by works means only, by Judaism; to be justified by faith means, by embracing Christianity, that is, the system of doctrines so called." Sure it is that Abraham could not in this sense be justified either by faith or by works; and equally sure that David (taking the words thus) was justified by works, and not by faith. Who raised up Jesus from the dead - As he did in a manner both Abraham and Sarah. If we believe on him who raised up Jesus - God the Father therefore is the proper object of justifying faith. It is observable, that St. Paul here, in speaking both of our faith and of the faith of Abraham, puts a part for the whole. And he mentions that part, with regard to Abraham, which would naturally affect the Jews most.

25. Who was delivered - To death. For our offenses - As an atonement for them. And raised for our justification - To empower us to receive that atonement by faith.

V

1. Being justified by faith - This is the sum of the preceding chapters. We have peace with God - Being enemies to God no longer, ver. 10; neither fearing his wrath, ver. 9. We have peace, hope, love, and power over sin, the sum of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters. These are the fruits of justifying faith: where these are not, that faith is not.

2. Into this grace - This state of favour.

3. We glory in tribulations also - Which we are so far from esteeming a mark of God's displeasure, that we receive them as tokens of his fatherly love, whereby we are prepared for a more exalted happiness. The Jews objected to the persecuted state of the Christians as inconsistent with the people of the Messiah. It is therefore with great propriety that the apostle so often mentions the blessings arising from this very thing.

4. And patience works more experience of the sincerity of our grace, and of God's power and faithfulness.

5. Hope shameth us not - That is, gives us the highest glorying. We glory in this our hope, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts - The divine conviction of God's love to us, and that love to God which is both the earnest and the beginning of heaven. By the Holy Ghost - The efficient cause of all these present blessings, and the earnest of those to come.

6. How can we now doubt of God's love? For when we were without strength - Either to think, will, or do anything good. In due time - Neither too soon nor too late; but in that very point of time which the wisdom of God knew to be more proper than any other. Christ died for the ungodly - Not only to set them a pattern, or to procure them power to follow it. It does not appear that this expression, of dying for any one, has any other signification than that of rescuing the life of another by laying down our own.

7. A just man - One who gives to all what is strictly their due The good man - One who is eminently holy; full of love, of compassion, kindness, mildness, of every heavenly and amiable temper. Perhaps-one-would-even-dare to die - Every word increases the strangeness of the thing, and declares even this to be something great and unusual.

8. But God recommendeth - A most elegant expression. Those are wont to be recommended to us, who were before either unknown to, or alienated from, us. While we were sinners - So far from being good, that we were not even just.

9. By his blood - By his bloodshedding. We shall be saved from wrath through him - That is, from all the effects of the wrath of God. But is there then wrath in God? Is not wrath a human passion? And how can this human passion be in God? We may answer this by another question: Is not love a human passion? And how can this human passion be in God? But to answer directly: wrath in man, and so love in man, is a human passion. But wrath in God is not a human passion; nor is love, as it is in God. Therefore the inspired writers ascribe both the one and the other to God only in an analogical sense.

10. If - As sure as; so the word frequently signifies; particularly in this and the eighth chapter. We shalt be saved - Sanctified and glorified. Through his life - "Whoever liveth to make intercession for us."

11. And not only so, but we also glory - The whole sentence, from the third to the eleventh verse, may be taken together thus: We not only "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," but also in the midst of tribulations we glory in God himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.

12. Therefore - This refers to all the preceding discourse; from which the apostle infers what follows. He does not therefore properly make a digression, but returns to speak again of sin and of righteousness. As by one man - Adam; who is mentioned, and not Eve, as being the representative of mankind. Sin entered into the world - Actual sin, and its consequence, a sinful nature. And death - With all its attendants. It entered into the world when it entered into being; for till then it did not exist. By sin - Therefore it could not enter before sin. Even so - Namely, by one man. In that - So the word is used also, [2 Cor. v, 4](#). All sinned - In Adam. These words assign the reason why death came upon all men; infants themselves not excepted, in that all sinned.

13. For until the law sin was in the world - All, I say, had sinned, for sin was in the world long before the written law; but, I grant, sin is not so much imputed, nor so severely punished by God, where there is no express law to convince men of it. Yet that all had sinned, even then, appears in that all died.

14. Death reigned - And how vast is his kingdom! Scarce can we find any king who has as many subjects, as are the kings whom he hath conquered. Even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression - Even over infants who had never sinned, as Adam did, in their own persons; and over others who had not, like him, sinned against an express law. Who is the figure of him that was to come - Each of them being a public person, and a federal head of mankind. The one, the fountain of sin and death to mankind by his offense; the other, of righteousness and life by his free gift. Thus far the apostle shows the agreement between the first and second Adam: afterward he shows the differences between them. The agreement may be summed up thus: As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so by one man righteousness entered into the world, and life by righteousness. As death passed upon all men, in that all had sinned; so life passed upon all men, (who are in the second Adam by faith,) in that all are justified. And as death through the sin of the first Adam reigned even over them who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression; so through the righteousness of Christ, even those who have not obeyed, after the likeness of his obedience, shall reign in life. We may add, As the sin of Adam, without the sins which we afterwards committed, brought us death; so the righteousness of Christ, without the good works which we afterwards perform, brings us life: although still every good, as well as evil, work, will receive its due reward.

15. Yet not - St. Paul now describes the difference between Adam and Christ; and that much more directly and expressly than the agreement between them. Now the fall and the free gift differ,

1. In amplitude, ver. 15.
2. He from whom sin came, and He from whom the free gift came, termed also "the gift of righteousness," differ in power, ver. 16.
3. The reason of both is subjoined, ver. 17.
4. This premised, the offense and the free gift are compared, with regard to their effect, ver. 18, and with regard to their cause, ver. 19.

16. The sentence was by one offense to Adam's condemnation - Occasioning the sentence of death to pass upon him, which, by consequence, overwhelmed his posterity. But the free gift is of many offenses unto justification - Unto the purchasing it for all men, notwithstanding many offenses.

17. There is a difference between grace and the gift. Grace is opposed to the offense; the gift, to death, being the gift of life.

18. Justification of life - Is that sentence of God, by which a sinner under sentence of death is adjudged to life.

19. As by the disobedience of one man many (that is, all men) were constituted sinners - Being then in the loins of their first parent, the common head and representative of them all. So by the obedience of one - By his obedience unto death; by his dying for us. Many - All that believe. Shall be constituted righteous - Justified, pardoned.

20. The law came in between - The offense and the free gift. That the offense might abound - That is, the consequence (not the design) of the law's coming in was, not the taking away of sin, but the increase of it. Yet where sin abounded, grace did much more abound - Not only in the remission of that sin which Adam brought on us, but of all our own; not only in remission of sins, but infusion of holiness; not only in deliverance from death, but admission to everlasting life, a far more noble and excellent life than that which we lost by Adam's fall.

21. That as sin had reigned - so grace also might reign - Which could not reign before the fall; before man had sinned. Through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord - Here is pointed out the source of all our blessings, the rich and free grace of God. The meritorious cause; not any works of righteousness of man, but the alone merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. The effect or end of all; not only pardon, but life; divine life, leading to glory.

VI

1. The apostle here sets himself more fully to vindicate his doctrine from the consequence above suggested, chap. iii, 7, 8. He had then only in strong terms denied and renounced it: here he removes the very foundation thereof.

2. Dead to sin - Freed both from the guilt and from the power of it.

3. As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into his death - In baptism we, through faith, are ingrafted into Christ; and we draw new spiritual life from this new root, through his Spirit, who fashions us like unto him, and particularly with regard to his death and resurrection.

4. We are buried with him - Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion. That as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory - Glorious power. Of the Father, so we also, by the same power, should rise again; and as he lives a new life in heaven, so we should walk in newness of life. This, says the apostle, our very baptism represents to us.

5. For - Surely these two must go together; so that if we are indeed made conformable to his death, we shall also know the power of his resurrection.

6. Our old man - Coeval with our being, and as old as the fall; our evil nature; a strong and beautiful expression for that entire depravity and corruption which by nature spreads itself over the whole man, leaving no part uninfected. This in a believer is crucified with Christ, mortified, gradually killed, by virtue of our union with him. That the body of sin - All evil tempers, words, and actions, which are the "members" of the "old man," [Colossians iii, 5](#), might be destroyed.

7. For he that is dead - With Christ. Is freed from the guilt of past, and from the power of present, sin, as dead men from the commands of their former masters.

8. Dead with Christ - Conformed to his death, by dying to sin.

10. He died to sin - To atone for and abolish it. He liveth unto God - A glorious eternal life, such as we shall live also.

12. Let not sin reign even in your mortal body - It must be subject to death, but it need not be subject to sin.

13. Neither present your members to sin - To corrupt nature, a mere tyrant. But to God - Your lawful King.

14. Sin shall not have dominion over you - It has neither right nor power. For ye are not under the law - A dispensation of terror and bondage, which only shows sin, without enabling you to conquer it. But under grace - Under the merciful dispensation of the gospel, which brings complete victory over it to every one who is under the powerful influences of the Spirit of Christ.

17. The form of doctrine into which ye have been delivered - Literally it is, The mould into which ye have been delivered; which, as it contains a beautiful allusion, conveys also a very instructive admonition; intimating that our minds, all pliant and ductile, should be

conformed to the gospel precepts, as liquid metal, take the figure of the mould into which they are cast.

18. Being then set free from sin - We may see the apostles method thus far at one view:
- Chap. Ver.

1. Bondage to sin chap. iii, 9
2. The knowledge of sin by the law; a sense of God's wrath; inward death chap. iii, 20
3. The Revelation of the righteousness of God in Christ through the gospel chap. iii, 21
4. The center of all, faith, embracing that righteousness chap. iii, 22
5. Justification, whereby God forgives all past sin, and freely accepts the sinner chap. iii, 24
6. The gift of the Holy Ghost; a sense of chap. v, 5, God's love new inward life ver. 4
7. The free service of righteousness ver. 12

19. I speak after the manner of men - Thus it is necessary that the scripture should let itself down to the language of men. Because of the weakness of your flesh - Slowness of understanding flows from the weakness of the flesh, that is, of human nature. As ye have presented your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now present your members servants of righteousness unto holiness - Iniquity (whereof uncleanness is an eminent part) is here opposed to righteousness; and unto iniquity is the opposite of unto holiness. Righteousness here is a conformity to the divine will; holiness, to the whole divine nature. Observe, they who are servants of righteousness go on to holiness; but they who are servants to iniquity get no farther. Righteousness is service, because we live according to the will of another; but liberty, because of our inclination to it, and delight in it.

20. When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness - In all reason, therefore, ye ought now to be free from unrighteousness; to be as uniform and zealous in serving God as ye were in serving the devil.

21. Those things - He speaks of them as afar off.

23. Death - Temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Is the due wages of sin; but eternal life is the gift of God - The difference is remarkable. Evil works merit the reward they receive: good works do not. The former demand wages: the latter accept a free gift.

VII

1. The apostle continues the comparison between the former and the present state of a believer, and at the same time endeavours to wean the Jewish believers from their fondness for the Mosaic law. I speak to them that know the law - To the Jews chiefly here. As long - So long, and no longer. As it liveth - The law is here spoken of, by a common figure, as a person, to which, as to an husband, life and death are ascribed. But he speaks indifferently of the law being dead to us, or we to it, the sense being the same.

2. She is freed from the law of her husband - From that law which gave him a peculiar property in her.

4. Thus ye also - Are now as free from the Mosaic law as an husband is, when his wife is dead. By the body of Christ - Offered up; that is, by the merits of his death, that law expiring with him.

5. When ye were in the flesh - Carnally minded, in a state of nature; before we believed in Christ. Our sins which were by the law - Accidentally occasioned, or irritated thereby. Wrought in our members - Spread themselves all over the whole man.

6. Being dead to that whereby we were held - To our old husband, the law. That we might serve in newness of spirit - In a new, spiritual manner. And not in the oldness of the letter - Not in a bare literal, external way, as we did before.

7. What shall we say then - This is a kind of a digression, to the beginning of the next chapter, wherein the apostle, in order to show in the most lively manner the weakness and inefficacy of the law, changes the person and speaks as of himself, concerning the misery of one under the law. This St. Paul frequently does, when he is not speaking of his own person, but only assuming another character, chap. iii, 5, [1 Cor. x, 30](#), [1 Cor. iv, 6](#). The character here assumed is that of a man, first ignorant of the law, then under it and sincerely, but ineffectually, striving to serve God. To have spoken this of himself, or any true believer, would have been foreign to the whole scope of his discourse; nay, utterly contrary thereto, as well as to what is expressly asserted, chap. viii, 2. Is the law sin - Sinful in itself, or a promoter of sin. I had not known lust - That is, evil desire. I had not known it to be a sin; nay, perhaps I should not have known that any such desire was in me: it did not appear, till it was stirred up by the prohibition.

8. But sin - My inbred corruption. Taking occasion by the commandment - Forbidding, but not subduing it, was only fretted, and wrought in me so much the more all manner of evil desire. For while I was without the knowledge of the law, sin was dead - Neither so apparent, nor so active; nor was I under the least apprehensions of any danger from it.

9. And I was once alive without the law - Without the close application of it. I had much life, wisdom, virtue, strength: so I thought. But when the commandment - That is, the law, a part put for the whole; but this expression particularly intimates its compulsive force, which restrains, enjoins, urges, forbids, threatens. Came - In its spiritual meaning, to my

heart, with the power of God. Sin revived, and I died - My inbred sin took fire, and all my virtue and strength died away; and I then saw myself to be dead in sin, and liable to death eternal.

10. The commandment which was intended for life - Doubtless it was originally intended by God as a grand means of preserving and increasing spiritual life, and leading to life everlasting.

11. Deceived me - While I expected life by the law, sin came upon me unawares and slew all my hopes.

12. The commandment - That is, every branch of the law. Is holy, and just, and good - It springs from, and partakes of, the holy nature of God; it is every way just and right in itself; it is designed wholly for the good of man.

13. Was then that which is good made the cause of evil to me; yea, of death, which is the greatest of evil? Not so. But it was sin, which was made death to me, inasmuch as it wrought death in me even by that which is good - By the good law. So that sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful - The consequence of which was, that inbred sin, thus driving furiously in spite of the commandment, became exceeding sinful; the guilt thereof being greatly aggravated.

14. I am carnal - St. Paul, having compared together the past and present state of believers, that "in the flesh," ver. 5, and that "in the spirit," ver. 6, in answering two objections, (Is then the law sin? ver. 7, and, Is the law death? ver. 13,) interweaves the whole process of a man reasoning, groaning, striving, and escaping from the legal to the evangelical state. This he does from ver. 7, to the end of this chapter. Sold under sin - Totally enslaved; slaves bought with money were absolutely at their master's disposal.

16. It is good - This single word implies all the three that were used before, ver. 12, "holy, just, and good."

17. It is no more I that can properly be said to do it, but rather sin that dwelleth in me - That makes, as it were, another person, and tyrannizes over me.

18. In my flesh - The flesh here signifies the whole man as he is by nature.

21. I find then a law - An inward constraining power, flowing from the dictate of corrupt nature.

22. For I delight in the law of God - This is more than "I consent to," ver. 16. The day of liberty draws near. The inward man - Called the mind, ver. 23, 25.

23. But I see another law in my members - Another inward constraining power of evil inclinations and bodily appetites. Warring against the law of my mind - The dictate of my mind, which delights in the law of God. And captivating me - In spite of all my resistance

24. Wretched man that I am - The struggle is now come to the height; and the man, finding there is no help in himself, begins almost unawares to pray, Who shall deliver me? He then seeks and looks for deliverance, till God in Christ appears to answer his question.

The word which we translate deliver, implies force. And indeed without this there can be no deliverance. The body of this death - That is, this body of death; this mass of sin, leading to death eternal, and cleaving as close to me as my body to my soul. We may observe, the deliverance is not wrought yet.

25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord - That is, God will deliver me through Christ. But the apostle, as his frequent manner is, beautifully interweaves his assertion with thanksgiving; the hymn of praise answering in a manner to the voice of sorrow, "Wretched man that I am!" So then - He here sums up the whole, and concludes what he began, ver. 7. I myself - Or rather that I, the person whom I am personating, till this deliverance is wrought. Serve the law of God with my mind - My reason and conscience declare for God. But with my flesh the law of sin - But my corrupt passions and appetites still rebel. The man is now utterly weary of his bondage, and upon the brink of liberty.

VIII

1. There is therefore now no condemnation - Either for things present or past. Now he comes to deliverance and liberty. The apostle here resumes the thread of his discourse, which was interrupted, chap. vii, 7.

2. The law of the Spirit - That is, the gospel. Hath freed me from the law of sin and death - That is, the Mosaic dispensation.

3. For what the law - Of Moses. Could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh - Incapable of conquering our evil nature. If it could, God needed not to have sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh - We with our sinful flesh were devoted to death. But God sending his own Son, in the likeness of that flesh, though pure from sin, condemned that sin which was in our flesh; gave sentence, that sin should be destroyed, and the believer wholly delivered from it.

4. That the righteousness of the law - The holiness it required, described, ver. 11. Might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit - Who are guided in all our thoughts, words, and actions, not by corrupt nature, but by the Spirit of God. From this place St. Paul describes primarily the state of believers, and that of unbelievers only to illustrate this.

5. They that are after the flesh - Who remain under the guidance of corrupt nature. Mind the things of the flesh - Have their thoughts and affections fixed on such things as gratify corrupt nature; namely, on things visible and temporal; on things of the earth, on pleasure, (of sense or imagination,) praise, or riches. But they who are after the Spirit - Who are under his guidance. Mind the things of the Spirit - Think of, relish, love things invisible, eternal; the things which the Spirit hath revealed, which he works in us, moves us to, and promises to give us.

6. For to be carnally minded - That is, to mind the things of the flesh. Is death - The sure mark of spiritual death, and the way to death everlasting. But to be spiritually minded - That is, to mind the things of the Spirit. Is life - A sure mark of spiritual life, and the way to life everlasting. And attended with peace - The peace of God, which is the foretaste of life everlasting; and peace with God, opposite to the enmity mentioned in the next verse.

7. Enmity against God - His existence, power, and providence.

8. They who are in the flesh - Under the government of it.

9. In the Spirit - Under his government. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ - Dwelling and governing in him. He is none of his - He is not a member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation. A plain, express declaration, which admits of no exception. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

10. Now if Christ be in you - Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ. The body indeed is dead - Devoted to death. Because of sin - Heretofore committed. But the Spirit is

life - Already truly alive. Because of righteousness - Now attained. From ver. 13, St. Paul, having finished what he had begun, chap. vi, 1, describes purely the state of believers.

12. We are not debtors to the flesh - We ought not to follow it.

13. The deeds of the flesh - Not only evil actions, but evil desires, tempers, thoughts. If ye mortify - Kill, destroy these. Ye shall live - The life of faith more abundantly here, and hereafter the life of glory.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God - In all the ways of righteousness. They are the sons of God - Here St. Paul enters upon the description of those blessings which he comprises, ver. 30, in the word glorified; though, indeed, he does not describe mere glory, but that which is still mingled with the cross. The sum is, through sufferings to glory.

15. For ye - Who are real Christians. Have not received the spirit of bondage - The Holy Ghost was not properly a spirit of bondage, even in the time of the Old Testament. Yet there was something of bondage remaining even in those who then had received the Spirit. Again - As the Jews did before. We - All and every believer. Cry - The word denotes a vehement speaking, with desire, confidence, constancy. Abba, Father - The latter word explains the former. By using both the Syriac and the Greek word, St. Paul seems to point out the joint cry both of the Jewish and gentile believers. The spirit of bondage here seems directly to mean, those operations of the Holy Spirit by which the soul, on its first conviction, feels itself in bondage to sin, to the world, to Satan, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. This, therefore, and the Spirit of adoption, are one and the same Spirit, only manifesting itself in various operations, according to the various circumstances of the persons.

16. The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirit - With the spirit of every true believer, by a testimony distinct from that of his own spirit, or the testimony of a good conscience. Happy they who enjoy this clear and constant.

17. Joint heirs - That we may know it is a great inheritance which God will give us for he hath given a great one to his Son. If we suffer with him - Willingly and cheerfully, for righteousness' sake. This is a new proposition, referring to what follows.

18. For I reckon - This verse gives the reason why he but now mentioned sufferings and glory. When that glory "shall be revealed in us," then the sons of God will be revealed also.

19. For the earnest expectation - The word denotes a lively hope of something drawing near, and a vehement longing after it. Of the creation - Of all visible creatures, believers excepted, who are spoken of apart; each kind, according as it is capable. All these have been sufferers through sin; and to all these (the finally impenitent excepted) shall refreshment redound from the glory of the children of God. Upright heathens are by no means to be excluded from this earnest expectation: nay, perhaps something of it may at some times be found even in the vainest of men; who (although in the hurry of life they mistake vanity for liberty, and partly stifle, partly dissemble, their groans, yet) in their sober, quiet, sleepless, afflicted hours, pour forth many sighs in the ear of God.

20. The creation was made subject to vanity - Abuse, misery, and corruption. By him who subjected it - Namely, God, [Gen. iii, 17](#), v, 29. Adam only made it liable to the sentence which God pronounced; yet not without hope.

21. The creation itself shall be delivered - Destruction is not deliverance: therefore whatsoever is destroyed, or ceases to be, is not delivered at all. Will, then, any part of the creation be destroyed? Into the glorious liberty - The excellent state wherein they were created.

22. For the whole creation groaneth together - With joint groans, as it were with one voice. And travaileth - Literally, is in the pains of childbirth, to be delivered of the burden of the curse. Until now - To this very hour; and so on till the time of deliverance.

23. And even we, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit - That is, the Spirit, who is the first-fruits of our inheritance. The adoption - Persons who had been privately adopted among the Roman were often brought forth into the forum, and there publicly owned as their sons by those who adopted them. So at the general resurrection, when the body itself is redeemed from death, the sons of God shall be publicly owned by him in the great assembly of men and angels. The redemption of our body - From corruption to glory and immortality.

24. For we are saved by hope - Our salvation is now only in hope. We do not yet possess this full salvation.

26. Likewise the Spirit - Nay, not only the universe, not only the children of God, but the Spirit of God also himself, as it were, groaneth, while he helpeth our infirmities, or weaknesses. Our understandings are weak, particularly in the things of God our desires are weak; our prayers are weak. We know not - Many times. What we should pray for - Much less are we able to pray for it as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us - In our hearts, even as Christ does in heaven. With groanings - The matter of which is from ourselves, but the Spirit forms them; and they are frequently inexpressible, even by the faithful themselves.

27. But he who searcheth the hearts - Wherein the Spirit dwells and intercedes. Knoweth - Though man cannot utter it. What is the mind of the Spirit, for he maketh intercession for the saints - Who are near to God. According to God - According to his will, as is worthy of God. and acceptable to him.

28. And we know - This in general; though we do not always know particularly what to pray for. That all things - Ease or pain, poverty or riches, and the ten thousand changes of life. Work together for good - Strongly and sweetly for spiritual and eternal good. To them that are called according to his purpose - His gracious design of saving a lost world by the death of his Son. This is a new proposition. St. Paul, being about to recapitulate the whole blessing contained in justification, (termed "glorification," ver. 30,) first goes back to the purpose or decree of God, which is frequently mentioned in holy writ. To explain this (nearly in the words of an eminent writer) a little more at large:-When a man has a work of time

and importance before him, he pauses, consults, and contrives; and when he has laid a plan, resolves or decrees to proceed accordingly. Having observed this in ourselves, we are ready to apply it to God also; and he, in condescension to us has applied it to himself. The works of providence and redemption are vast and stupendous, and therefore we are apt to conceive of God as deliberating and consulting on them, and then decreeing to act according to "the counsel of his own will;" as if, long before the world was made, he had been concerting measures both as to the making and governing of it, and had then writ down his decrees, which altered not, any more than the laws of the Medes and Persians. Whereas, to take this consulting and decreeing in a literal sense, would be the same absurdity as to ascribe a real human body and human passions to the ever-blessed God. This is only a popular representation of his infallible knowledge and unchangeable wisdom; that is, he does all things as wisely as a man can possibly do, after the deepest consultation, and as steadily pursues the most proper method as one can do who has laid a scheme beforehand. But then, though the effects be such as would argue consultation and consequent decrees in man, yet what need of a moment's consultation in Him who sees all things at one view? Nor had God any more occasion to pause and deliberate, and lay down rules for his own conduct from all eternity, than he has now. What was there any fear of his mistaking afterwards, if he had not beforehand prepared decrees, to direct him what he was to do? Will any man say, he was wiser before the creation than since? or had he then more leisure, that he should take that opportunity to settle his affairs, and make rules (or himself, from which he was never to vary? He has doubtless the same wisdom and all other perfections at this day which he had from eternity; and is now as capable of making decrees, or rather has no more occasion for them now than formerly: his understanding being always equally clear and bright, his wisdom equally infallible.

29. Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated conformable to the image of his Son - Here the apostle declares who those are whom he foreknew and predestinated to glory; namely, those who are conformable to the image of his Son. This is the mark of those who are foreknown and will be glorified,

2 Tim. ii, 19. Phil. iii, 10, 21.

30. Them he - In due time. Called - By his gospel and his Spirit. And whom he called - When obedient to the heavenly calling, *Acts xxvi, 19*. He also justified - Forgave and accepted. And whom he justified - Provided they "continued in his goodness," chap. xi, 22, he in the end glorified - St. Paul does not affirm, either here or in any other part of his writings, that precisely the same number of men are called, justified, and glorified. He does not deny that a believer may fall away and be cut off between his special calling and his glorification, chap. xi, 22. Neither does he deny that many are called who never are justified. He only affirms that this is the method whereby God leads us step by step toward heaven. He glorified - He

speaks as one looking back from the goal, upon the race of faith. Indeed grace, as it is glory begun, is both an earnest and a foretaste of eternal glory.

31. What shall we say then to these things - Related in the third, fifth, and eighth chapters? As if he had said, We cannot go, think, or wish anything farther. If God be for us - Here follow four periods, one general and three particular. Each begins with glorying in the grace of God, which is followed by a question suitable to it, challenging all opponents to all which, "I am persuaded," &c., is a general answer. The general period is, If God be for us, who can be against us? The first particular period, relating to the past time, is, He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not freely give us all things? The second, relating to the present, is, It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? The third, relating to the future, is, It is Christ that died - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

32. He that - This period contains four sentences: He spared not his own Son; therefore he will freely give us all things. He delivered him up for us all; therefore, none can lay anything to our charge. Freely - For all that follows justification is a free gift also. All things - Needful or profitable for us.

33. God's elect - The above-cited author observes, that long before the coming of Christ the heathen world revolted from the true God, and were therefore reprobated, or rejected. But the nation of the Jews were chosen to be the people of God, and were therefore styled, "the children" or "sons of God," [Deut. xiv, 1](#); "holy people," [Deut. vii, 6](#); [xiv, 2](#); "a chosen seed," [Deut. iv, 37](#); "the elect," [Isaiah xli, 8, 9](#); [xliii, 10](#); "the called of God," [Isaiah xlviii, 12](#). And these titles were given to all the nation of Israel, including both good and bad. Now the gospel having the most strict connection with the Books of the Old Testament, where these phrases frequently occur; and our Lord and his apostles being native Jews, and beginning to preach in the land of Israel, the language in which they preached would of course abound with the phrases of the Jewish nation. And hence it is easy to see why such of them as would not receive him were styled reprobated. For they no longer continued to be the people of God; whereas this and those other honourable titles were continued to all such Jews as embraced Christianity. And the same appellations which once belonged to the Jewish nation were now given to the gentile Christians also together with which they were invested with all the privileges of "the chosen people of God;" and nothing could cut them off from these but their own wilful apostasy. It does not appear that even good men were ever termed God's elect till above two thousand years from the creation. God's electing or choosing the nation of Israel, and separating them from the other nations, who were sunk in idolatry and all wickedness, gave the first occasion to this sort of language. And as the separating the Christians from the Jews was a like event, no wonder it was expressed in like words and phrases only with this difference, the term elect was of old applied to all the members of the visible church; whereas in the New Testament it is applied only to the members of the invisible.

34. Yea rather, that is risen - Our faith should not stop at his death, but be exercised farther on his resurrection, kingdom, second coming. Who maketh intercession for us - Presenting there his obedience, his sufferings, his prayers, and our prayers sanctified through him.

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ - Toward us? Shall affliction or distress - He proceeds in order, from less troubles to greater: can any of these separate us from his protection in it; and, if he sees good, deliverance from it?

36. All the day - That is, every day, continually. We are accounted - By our enemies; by ourselves. [Psalm xlv, 22](#).

37. We more than conquer - We are not only no losers, but abundant gainers, by all these trials. This period seems to describe the full assurance of hope.

38. I am persuaded - This is inferred from the thirty-fourth verse, in an admirable order: - Neither death" shall hurt us; For "Christ is dead;" "Nor life;" 'is risen" Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers; nor things present, nor things to come;" "is at the right hand of God:" "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature;" "maketh intercession for us." Neither death - Terrible as it is to natural men; a violent death in particular, ver. 36. Nor life - With all the affliction and distress it can bring, ver. 35; or a long, easy life; or all living men. Nor angels - Whether good (if it were possible they should attempt it) or bad, with all their wisdom and strength. Nor principalities, nor powers - Not even those of the highest rank, or the most eminent power. Nor things present - Which may befall us during our pilgrimage; or the whole world, till it passeth away. Nor things to come - Which may occur either when our time on earth is past, or when time itself is at an end, as the final judgment, the general conflagration, the everlasting fire. Nor height, nor depth - The former sentence respected the differences of times; this, the differences of places. How many great and various things are contained in these words, we do not, need not, cannot know yet. The height - In St. Paul's sublime style, is put for heaven. The depth - For the great abyss: that is, neither the heights, I will not say of walls, mountains, seas, but, of heaven itself, can move us; nor the abyss itself, the very thought of which might astonish the boldest creature. Nor any creature - Nothing beneath the Almighty; visible enemies he does not even deign to name. Shall be able - Either by force, ver. 35; or by any legal claim, ver. 33, &c. To separate us from the love of God in Christ - Which will surely save, protect, deliver us who believe in, and through, and from, them all.

IX

In this chapter St. Paul, after strongly declaring his love and esteem for them, sets himself to answer the grand objection of his countrymen; namely, that the rejection of the Jews and reception of the gentiles was contrary to the word of God. That he had not here the least thought of personal election or reprobation is manifest,

1. Because it lay quite wide of his design, which was this, to show that God's rejecting the Jews and receiving the gentiles was consistent with his word
2. Because such a doctrine would not only have had no tendency to convince, but would have evidently tended to harden, the Jews;
3. Because when he sums up his argument in the close of the chapter, he has not one word, or the least intimation, about it.

1. In Christ - This seems to imply an appeal to him. In the Holy Ghost - Through his grace.

2. I have great sorrow - A high degree of spiritual sorrow and of spiritual Joy may consist together, chap. viii, 39. By declaring his sorrow for the unbelieving Jews, who excluded themselves from all the blessings he had enumerated, he shows that what he was now about to speak, he did not speak from any prejudice to them.

3. I could wish - Human words cannot fully describe the motions of souls that are full of God. As if he had said, I could wish to suffer in their stead; yea, to be an anathema from Christ in their place. In how high a sense he wished this, who can tell, unless himself had been asked and had resolved the question? Certainly he did not then consider himself at all, but only others and the glory of God. The thing could not be; yet the wish was pious and solid; though with a tacit condition, if it were right and possible.

4. Whose is the adoption, &c. - He enumerates six prerogatives, of which the first pair respect God the Father, the second Christ, the third the Holy Ghost. The adoption and the glory - That is, Israel is the first-born child of God, and the God of glory is their God, [Deut. iv, 7](#); [Psalm cvi, 20](#). These are relative to each other. At once God is the Father of Israel, and Israel are the people of God. He speaks not here of the ark, or any corporeal thing. God himself is "the glory of his people Israel." And the covenants, and the giving of the law - The covenant was given long before the law. It is termed covenants, in the plural, because it was so often and so variously repeated, and because there were two dispositions of it, [Gal. iv, 24](#), frequently called two covenants; the one promising, the other exhibiting the promise. And the worship, and the promises - The true way of worshipping God; and all the promises made to the fathers.

5. To the preceding, St. Paul now adds two more prerogatives. Theirs are the fathers - The patriarchs and holy men of old, yea, the Messiah himself. Who is over all, God blessed forever - The original words imply the self-existent, independent Being, who was, is, and is

to come. Over all - The supreme; as being God, and consequently blessed forever. No words can more dearly express his divine, supreme majesty, and his gracious sovereignty both over Jews and, gentiles.

6. Not as if - The Jews imagined that the word of God must fail if all their nation were not saved. This St. Paul now refutes, and proves that the word itself had foretold their falling away. The word of God - The promises of God to Israel. Had fallen to the ground - This could not be. Even now, says the apostle, some enjoy the promises; and hereafter "all Israel shall be saved." This is the sum of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters. For - Here he enters upon the proof of it. All are not Israel, who are of Israel - The Jews vehemently maintained the contrary; namely, that all who were born Israelites, and they only, were the people of God. The former part of this assertion is refuted here, the latter, ver. 24, &c. The sum is, God accepts all believers, and them only; and this is no way contrary to his word. Nay, he hath declared in his word, both by types and by express testimonies, that believers are accepted as the "children of the promise," while unbelievers are rejected, though they are "children after the flesh." All are not Israel - Not in the favour of God. Who are lineally descended of Israel.

7. Neither because they are lineally the seed of Abraham, will it follow that they are all children of God - This did not hold even in Abraham's own family; and much less in his remote descendants. But God then said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called - That is, Isaac, not Ishmael, shall be called thy seed; that seed to which the promise is made.

8. That is, Not the children, &c. - As if he had said, This is a clear type of things to come; showing us, that in all succeeding generations, not the children of the flesh, the lineal descendants of Abraham, but the children of the promise, they to whom the promise is made, that is, believers, are the children of God. [Gen. xxi, 12](#)

9. For this is the word of the promise - By the power of which Isaac was conceived, and not by the power of nature. Not, Whosoever is born of thee shall be blessed, but, At this time - Which I now appoint. I will come, and Sarah shall have a son - And he shall inherit the blessing. [Gen. xviii, 10.](#)

10. And that God's blessing does not belong to all the descendants of Abraham, appears not only by this instance, but by that of Esau and Jacob, who was chosen to inherit the blessing, before either of them had done good or evil. The apostle mentions this to show, that neither were their ancestors accepted through any merit of their own. That the purpose of God according to election might stand - Whose purpose was, to elect or choose the promised seed. Not of works - Not for any preceding merit in him he chose. But of him that called - Of his own good pleasure who called to that privilege whom he saw good.

12. The elder - Esau. Shall serve the younger - Not in person, for he never did; but in his posterity. Accordingly the Edomites were often brought into subjection by the Israelites. [Gen. xxv, 23.](#)

13. As it is written - With which word in Genesis, spoken so long before, that of Malachi agrees. I have loved Jacob - With a peculiar love; that is, the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob. And I have, comparatively, hated Esau - That is, the Edomites, the posterity of Esau. But observe,

1. This does not relate to the person of Jacob or Esau
2. Nor does it relate to the eternal state either of them or their posterity.

Thus far the apostle has been proving his proposition, namely, that the exclusion of a great part of the seed of Abraham, yea, and of Isaac, from the special promises of God, was so far from being impossible, that, according to the scriptures themselves, it had actually happened. He now introduces and refutes an objection. [Mal. i, 2, 3.](#)

14. Is there injustice with God - Is it unjust in God to give Jacob the blessing rather than Esau? or to accept believers, and them only. God forbid - In no wise. This is well consistent with justice; for he has a right to fix the terms on which he will show mercy, according to his declaration to Moses, petitioning for all the people, after they had committed idolatry with the golden calf. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy - According to the terms I myself have fixed. And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion - Namely, on those only who submit to my terms, who accept of it in the way that I have appointed.

15. [Exod. xxxiii, 19.](#)

16. It - The blessing. Therefore is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth - It is not the effect either of the will or the works of man, but of the grace and power of God. The will of man is here opposed to the grace of God, and man's running, to the divine operation. And this general declaration respects not only Isaac and Jacob, and the Israelites in the time of Moses, but likewise all the spiritual children of Abraham, even to the end of the world.

17. Moreover - God has an indisputable right to reject those who will not accept the blessings on his own terms. And this he exercised in the case of Pharaoh; to whom, after many instances of stubbornness and rebellion, he said, as it is recorded in scripture, For this very thing have I raised thee up - That is, Unless thou repent, this will surely be the consequence of my raising thee up, making thee a great and glorious king, that my power will be shown upon thee, (as indeed it was, by overwhelming him and his army in the sea,) and my name declared through all the earth - As it is at this day. Perhaps this may have a still further meaning. It seems that God was resolved to show his power over the river, the insects, other animals, (with the natural causes of their health, diseases, life, and death,) over the meteors, the air, the sun, (all of which were worshipped by the Egyptians, from whom other nations learned their idolatry,) and at once over all their gods, by that terrible stroke of slaying all their priests, and their choicest victims, the firstborn of man and beast; and all this with a design, not only to deliver his people Israel, (for which a single act of omnipotence

would have sufficed,) but to convince the Egyptians, that the objects of their worship were but the creatures of Jehovah, and entirely in his power, and to draw them and the neighbouring nations, who should hear of all these wonders, from their idolatry, to worship the one God. For the execution of this design, (in order to the display of the divine power over the various objects of their worship, in variety of wonderful acts, which were at the same time just punishments for their cruel oppression of the Israelites,) God was pleased to raise to the throne of an absolute monarchy, a man, not whom he had made wicked on purpose, but whom he found so, the proudest, the most daring and obstinate of all the Egyptian princes; and who, being incorrigible, well deserved to be set up in that situation, where the divine judgments fell the heaviest. [Exod. ix, 16.](#)

18. So then - That is, accordingly he does show mercy on his own terms, namely, on them that believe. And whom he willeth - Namely, them that believe not. He hardeneth - Leaves to the hardness of their hearts.

19. Why doth he still find fault - The particle still is strongly expressive of the objector's sour, morose murmuring. For who hath resisted his will - The word his likewise expresses his surliness and aversion to God, whom he does not even deign to name.

20. Nay, but who art thou, O man - Little, impotent, ignorant man. That repliest against God - That accusest God of injustice, for himself fixing the terms on which he will show mercy? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus - Why hast thou made me capable of honour and immortality, only by believing?

21. Hath not the potter power over the clay - And much more hath not God power over his creatures, to appoint one vessel, namely, the believer, to honour, and another, the unbeliever, to dishonour? If we survey the right which God has over us, in a more general way, with regard to his intelligent creatures, God may be considered in two different views, as Creator, Proprietor, and Lord of all; or, as their moral Governor, and Judge. God, as sovereign Lord and Proprietor of all, dispenses his gifts or favours to his creatures with perfect wisdom, but by no rules or methods of proceeding that we are acquainted with. The time when we shall exist, the country where we shall live, our parents, our constitution of body and turn of mind; these, and numberless other circumstances, are doubtless ordered with perfect wisdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our sight. But God's methods of dealing with us, as our Governor and Judge, are dearly revealed and perfectly known; namely, that he will finally reward every man according to his works: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, though "He hath mercy on whom he willeth, and whom he willeth he hardeneth," that is, suffers to be hardened in consequence of their obstinate wickedness; yet his is not the will of an arbitrary, capricious, or tyrannical being. He wills nothing but what is infinitely wise and good; and therefore his will is a most proper rule of judgment. He will show mercy, as he hath assured us, to none but true believers, nor harden any but such as obstinately refuse his mercy. [Jer. xviii, 6, 7](#)

22. What if God, being willing - Referring to ver. 18, 19. That is, although it was now his will, because of their obstinate unbelief, To show his wrath - Which necessarily presupposes sin. And to make his power known - This is repeated from the seventeenth verse. Yet endured - As he did Pharaoh. With much longsuffering - Which should have led them to repentance. The vessels of wrath - Those who had moved his wrath by still rejecting his mercy. Fitted for destruction - By their own wilful and final impenitence. Is there any injustice in this?

23. That he might make known - What if by showing such longsuffering even to "the vessels of wrath," he did the more abundantly show the greatness of his glorious goodness, wisdom, and power, on the vessels of mercy; on those whom he had himself, by his grace, prepared for glory. Is this any injustice?

24. Even us - Here the apostle comes to the other proposition, of grace free for all, whether Jew or gentile. Of the Jews - This he treats of, ver. 25. Of the gentiles - Treated of in the same verse.

25. Beloved - As a spouse. Who once was not beloved - Consequently, not unconditionally elected. This relates directly to the final restoration of the Jews. [Hosea ii, 23](#)

26. There shall they be called the sons of God - So that they need not leave their own country and come to Judea. [Hosea i, 10](#)

27. But Isaiah testifies, that (as many gentiles will be accepted, so) many Jews will be rejected; that out of all the thousands of Israel, a remnant only shall be saved. This was spoken originally of the few that were saved from the ravage of Sennacherib's army. [Isaiah x, 22, 23](#)

28. For he is finishing or cutting short his account - In rigorous justice, will leave but a small remnant. There will be so general a destruction, that but a small number will escape.

29. As Isaiah had said before - Namely, [Isaiah i, 9](#), concerning those who were besieged in Jerusalem by Rezin and Pekah. Unless the Lord had left us a seed - Which denotes,

1. The present paucity:
2. The future abundance. We had been as Sodom - So that it is no unexampled thing for the main body of the Jewish nation to revolt from God, and perish in their sin.

30. What shall we say then - What is to be concluded from all that has been said but this, That the gentiles, who followed not after righteousness - Who a while ago had no knowledge of, no care or thought about, it. Have attained to righteousness - Or justification. Even the righteousness which is by faith. This is the first conclusion we may draw from the preceding observations. The second is, that Israel - The Jews Although following after the law of righteousness - That law which, duly used, would have led them to faith, and thereby to righteousness. Have not attained to the law of righteousness - To that righteousness or justification which is one great end of the law

32. And wherefore have they not? Is it because God eternally decreed they should not? There is nothing like this to be met with but agreeable to his argument the apostle gives us this good reason for it, Because they sought it not by faith - Whereby alone it could be attained. But as it were - In effect, if not professedly, by works. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone - Christ crucified.

33. As it is written - Foretold by their own prophet. Behold, I lay in Zion - I exhibit in my church, what, though it is in truth the only sure foundation of happiness, yet will be in fact a stumblingstone and rock of offense - An occasion of ruin to many, through their obstinate unbelief. [Isaiah viii, 14](#); [Isaiah xxviii, 16](#)

X

1. My prayer to God is, that they may be saved - He would not have prayed for this, had they been absolutely reprobated.

2. They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge - They had zeal without knowledge; we have knowledge without zeal.

3. For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God - Of the method God has established for the justification of a sinner. And seeking to establish their own righteousness - Their own method of acceptance with God. Have not submitted to the righteousness of God - The way of justification which he hath fixed.

4. For Christ is the end of the law - The scope and aim of it. It is the very design of the law, to bring men to believe in Christ for justification and salvation. And he alone gives that pardon and life which the law shows the want of, but cannot give. To every one - Whether Jew or gentile, treated of, ver. 11, &c. That believeth - Treated of, ver. 5.

5. For Moses describeth the only righteousness which is attainable by the law, when he saith, The man who doeth these things shall live by them - that is, he that perfectly keeps all these precepts in every point, he alone may claim life and salvation by them. But this way of justification is impossible to any who have ever transgressed any one law in any point. [Lev. xviii, 5](#)

6. But the righteousness which is by faith - The method of becoming righteous by believing. Speaketh a very different language, and may be considered as expressing itself thus: (to accommodate to our present subject the words which Moses spake, touching the plainness of his law:) Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, as if it were to bring Christ down: or, Who shall descend into the grave, as if it were to bring him again from the dead - Do not imagine that these things are to be done now, in order to procure thy pardon and salvation. [Deut. xxx, 14](#).

8. But what saith he - Moses. Even these words, so remarkably applicable to the subject before us. All is done ready to thy hand. The word is nigh thee - Within thy reach; easy to be understood, remembered, practiced. This is eminently true of the word of faith - The gospel. Which we preach - The sum of which is, If thy heart believe in Christ, and thy life confess him, thou shalt be saved.

9. If thou confess with thy mouth - Even in time of persecution, when such a confession may send thee to the lions.

10. For with the heart - Not the understanding only. Man believeth to righteousness - So as to obtain justification. And with the mouth confession is made - So as to obtain final salvation. Confession here implies the whole of outward, as believing does the root of all inward, religion.

11. [Isaiah xxviii, 16](#).

12. The same Lord of all is rich - So that his blessings are never to be exhausted, nor is he ever constrained to hold his hand. The great truth proposed in ver. 11 is so repeated here, and in ver. 13, and farther confirmed, ver. 14, 15, as not only to imply, that "whosoever calleth upon him shall be saved;" but also that the will of God is, that all should savingly call upon him.

13. [Joel ii, 32.](#)

15. But how shall they preach, unless they be sent - Thus by a chain of reasoning, from God's will that the gentiles also should "call upon him," St. Paul infers that the apostles were sent by God to preach to the gentiles also. The feet - Their very footsteps; their coming. [Isaiah lii, 7.](#)

16. [Isaiah liii, 1.](#)

17. Faith, indeed, ordinarily cometh by hearing; even by hearing the word of God.

18. But their unbelief was not owing to the want of hearing For they have heard. Yes verily - So many nations have already heard the preachers of the gospel, that I may in some sense say of them as David did of the lights of heaven. [Psalm xxix, 4](#)

19. But hath not Israel known - They might have known, even from Moses and Isaiah, that many of the gentiles would be received, and many of the Jews rejected. I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are not a nation - As they followed gods that were not gods, so he accepted in their stead a nation that was not a nation; that is, a nation that was not in covenant with God. A foolish nation - Such are all which know not God. [Deut. xxxii, 21](#)

20. But Isaiah is very bold - And speaks plainly what Moses but intimated. [Isaiah lxxv, 1, 2.](#)

21. An unbelieving and gainsaying people - Just opposite to those who believed with their hearts, and made confession with their mouths.

 XI

1. Hath God rejected his whole people - All Israel? In no wise. Now there is "a remnant" who believe, ver. 5; and hereafter "all Israel will be saved," ver. 26.

2. God hath not rejected that part of his people whom he foreknew - Speaking after the manner of men. For, in fact, knowing and foreknowing are the same thing with God, who knows or sees all things at once, from everlasting to everlasting. Know ye not - That in a parallel case, amidst a general apostasy, when Elijah thought the whole nation was fallen into idolatry, God "knew" there was "a remnant" of true worshippers.

3. [1 Kings xix, 10](#).

4. To Baal - Nor to the golden calves.

5. According to the election of grace - According to that gracious purpose of God, "He that believeth shall be saved."

6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works - Whether ceremonial or moral. Else grace is no longer grace - The very nature of grace is lost. And if it be of works, then it is no more grace: else work is no longer work - But the very nature of it is destroyed. There is something so absolutely inconsistent between the being justified by grace, and the being justified by works, that, if you suppose either, you of necessity exclude the other. For what is given to works is the payment of a debt; whereas grace implies an unmerited favour. So that the same benefit cannot, in the very nature of things, be derived from both.

7. What then - What is the conclusion from the whole? It is this: that Israel in general hath not obtained justification; but those of them only who believe. And the rest were blinded - By their own wilful prejudice.

8. God hath at length withdrawn his Spirit, and so given them up to a spirit of slumber; which is fulfilled unto this day. [Isaiah xxix, 10](#)

9. And David saith - In that prophetic imprecation, which is applicable to them, as well as to Judas. A recompence - Of their preceding wickedness. So sin is punished by sin; and thus the gospel, which should have fed and strengthened their souls, is become a means of destroying them. [Psalm lxix, 22, 23](#)

11. Have they stumbled so as to fall - Totally and finally? No But by their fall - Or slip: it is a very soft word in the original. Salvation is come to the gentiles - See an instance of this, [Acts xiii, 46](#). To provoke them - The Jews themselves, to jealousy.

12. The first part of this verse is treated of, ver. 13, &c.; the latter, How much more their fulness, (that is, their full conversion,) ver. 23, &c. So many prophecies refer to this grand event, that it is surprising any Christian can doubt of it. And these are greatly confirmed by the wonderful preservation of the Jews as a distinct people to this day. When it is accomplished, it will be so strong a demonstration, both of the Old and New Testament Revelation, as will doubtless convince many thousand Deists, in countries nominally Christian; of whom there will, of course, be increasing multitudes among merely nominal Christians. And this

will be a means of swiftly propagating the gospel among Mahometans and Pagans; who would probably have received it long ago, had they conversed only with real Christians.

13. I magnify my office - Far from being ashamed of ministering to the gentiles, I glory therein; the rather, as it may be a means of provoking my brethren to jealousy.

14. My flesh - My kinsmen.

15. Life from the dead - Overflowing life to the world, which was dead.

16. And this will surely come to pass. For if the first fruits be holy, so is the lump - The consecration of them was esteemed the consecration of all and so the conversion of a few Jews is an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. And if the root be holy - The patriarchs from whom they spring, surely God will at length make their descendants also holy.

17. Thou - O gentile. Being a wild olive tree - Had the graft been nobler than the stock, yet its dependance on it for life and nourishment would leave it no room to boast against it. How much less, when, contrary to what is practiced among men, the wild olive tree is engrafted on the good!

18. Boast not against the branches - Do not they do this who despise the Jews? or deny their future conversion?

20. They were broken off for unbelief, and thou standest by faith - Both conditionally, not absolutely: if absolutely, there might have been room to boast. By faith - The free gift of God, which therefore ought to humble thee.

21. Be not highminded, but fear - We may observe, this fear is not opposed to trust, but to pride and security.

22. Else shalt thou - Also, who now "standest by faith," be both totally and finally cut off.

24. Contrary to nature - For according to nature, we graft the fruitful branch into the wild stock; but here the wild branch is grafted into the fruitful stock.

25. St. Paul calls any truth known but to a few, a mystery. Such had been the calling of the gentiles: such was now the conversion of the Jews. Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits - Puffed up with your present advantages; dreaming that ye are the only church; or that the church of Rome cannot fail. Hardness in part is happened to Israel, till - Israel therefore is neither totally nor finally rejected. The fulness of the gentiles be come in - Till there be a vast harvest amongst the heathens.

26. And so all Israel shall be saved - Being convinced by the coming of the gentiles. But there will be a still larger harvest among the gentiles, when all Israel is come in. The deliverer shall come - Yea, the deliverer is come; but not the full fruit of his coming. [Isaiah lix, 20](#)

28. They are now enemies - To the gospel, to God, and to themselves, which God permits. For your sake: but as for the election - That part of them who believe, they are beloved.

29. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance - God does not repent of his gifts to the Jews, or his calling of the gentiles.

32. For God hath shut up all together in disobedience - Suffering each in their turn to revolt from him. First, God suffered the gentiles in the early age to revolt, and took the family of Abraham as a peculiar seed to himself. Afterwards he permitted them to fall through unbelief, and took in the believing gentiles. And he did even this to provoke the Jews to jealousy, and so bring them also in the end to faith. This was truly a mystery in the divine conduct, which the apostle adores with such holy astonishment.

33. O the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God - In the ninth chapter, St. Paul had sailed but in a narrow sea: now he is in the ocean. The depth of the riches is described, ver. 35; the depth of wisdom, ver. 34; the depth of knowledge, in the latter part of this verse. Wisdom directs all things to the best end; knowledge sees that end. How unsearchable are his judgments - With regard to unbelievers. His ways - With regard to believers. His ways are more upon a level; His judgments "a great deep." But even his ways we cannot trace.

34. Who hath known the mind of the Lord - Before or any farther than he has revealed it. [Isaiah xl, 13.](#)

35. Given to him - Either wisdom or power?

36. Of him - As the Creator. Through him - As the Preserver. To him - As the ultimate end, are all things. To him be the glory of his riches, wisdom, knowledge. Amen - A concluding word, in which the affection of the apostle, when it is come to the height, shuts up all.

XII

1. I exhort you - St. Paul uses to suit his exhortations to the doctrines he has been delivering. So here the general use from the whole is contained in the first and second verses. The particular uses follow, from the third verse to the end of the Epistle. By the tender mercies of God - The whole sentiment is derived from Romans. The expression itself is particularly opposed to "the wrath of God," chap. i, 18. It has a reference here to the entire gospel, to the whole economy of grace or mercy, delivering us from "the wrath of God," and exciting us to all duty. To present - So chap. vi, 13; xvi, 19; now actually to exhibit before God. Your bodies - That is, yourselves; a part is put for the whole; the rather, as in the ancient sacrifices of beasts, the body was the whole. These also are particularly named in opposition to that vile abuse of their bodies mentioned, chap. i, 24. Several expressions follow, which have likewise a direct reference to other expressions in the same chapter. A sacrifice - Dead to sin and living - By that life which is mentioned, chap. i, 17; vi, 4, &c. Holy - Such as the holy law requires, chap. vii, 12. Acceptable - chap. viii, 8. Which is your reasonable service - The worship of the heathens was utterly unreasonable, chap. i, 18, &c.; so was the glorying of the Jews, chap. ii, 3, &c. But a Christian acts in all things by the highest reason, from the mercy of God inferring his own duty.

2. And be not conformed - Neither in judgment, spirit, nor behaviour. To this world - Which, neglecting the will of God, entirely follows its own. That ye may prove - Know by sure trial; which is easily done by him who has thus presented himself to God. What is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God - The will of God is here to be understood of all the preceptive part of Christianity, which is in itself so excellently good, so acceptable to God, and so perfective of our natures.

3. And I say - He now proceeds to show what that will of God is. Through the grace which is given to me - He modestly adds this, lest he should seem to forget his own direction. To every one that is among you - Believers at Rome. Happy, had they always remembered this! The measure of faith - Treated of in the first and following chapters, from which all other gifts and graces flow.

5. So we - All believers. Are one body - Closely connected together in Christ, and consequently ought to be helpful to each other.

6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace which is given us - Gifts are various: grace is one. Whether it be prophecy - This, considered as an extraordinary gift, is that whereby heavenly mysteries are declared to men, or things to come foretold. But it seems here to mean the ordinary gift of expounding scripture. Let us prophesy according to the analogy of faith - St. Peter expresses it, "as the oracles of God;" according to the general tenor of them; according to that grand scheme of doctrine which is delivered therein, touching original sin, justification by faith, and present, inward salvation. There is a wonderful analogy between all these; and a close and intimate connection between the chief

heads of that faith "which was once delivered to the saints." Every article therefore concerning which there is any question should be determined by this rule; every doubtful scripture interpreted according to the grand truths which run through the whole.

7. Ministering - As deacons. He that teacheth - Catechumens; for whom particular instructors were appointed. He that exhorteth - Whose peculiar business it was to urge Christians to duty, and to comfort them in trials.

8. He that presideth - That hath the care of a flock. He that showeth mercy - In any instance. With cheerfulness - Rejoicing that he hath such an opportunity.

9. Having spoken of faith and its fruit, ver. 3, &c., he comes now to love. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh verses refer to chapter the seventh; the twelfth verse to chapter the eighth; the thirteenth verse, of communicating to the saints, whether Jews or gentiles, to chapter the ninth, &c. Part of the sixteenth verse is repeated from chap. xi, 25. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good - Both inwardly and outwardly, whatever ill-will or danger may follow.

10. In honour preferring one another - Which you will do, if you habitually consider what is good in others, and what is evil in yourselves.

11. Whatsoever ye do, do it with your might. In every business diligently and fervently serving the Lord - Doing all to God, not to man.

12. Rejoicing in hope - Of perfect holiness and everlasting happiness. Hitherto of faith and love; now of hope also, see the fifth and eighth chapters; afterwards of duties toward others; saints, ver. 13 persecutors, ver. 14 friends, strangers, enemies, ver. 15, &c.

13. Communicate to the necessities of the saints - Relieve all Christians that are in want. It is remarkable, that the apostle, treating expressly of the duties flowing from the communion of saints, yet never says one word about the dead. Pursue hospitality - Not only embracing those that offer, but seeking opportunities to exercise it.

14. Curse not - No, not in your heart.

15. Rejoice - The direct opposite to weeping is laughter; but this does not so well suit a Christian.

16. Mind not high things - Desire not riches, honour, or the company of the great.

17. Provide - Think beforehand; contrive to give as little offense as may be to any.

19. Dearly beloved - So he softens the rugged spirit. Revenge not yourselves, but leave that to God. Perhaps it might more properly be rendered, leave room for wrath; that is, the wrath of God, to whom vengeance properly belongs. [Deut. xxxii, 35](#)

20. Feed him - With your own hand: if it be needful, even put bread into his mouth. Heap coals of fire upon his head - That part which is most sensible. "So artists melt the sullen ore of lead, By heaping coals of fire upon its head; In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow, And pure from dross the silver runs below." [Prov. xxv, 21](#), &c.

21. And if you see no present fruit, yet persevere. Be not overcome with evil - As all are who avenge themselves. But overcome evil with good. Conquer your enemies by kindness and patience.

XIII

1. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, whose city was the seat of the empire, speaks largely of obedience to magistrates: and this was also, in effect, a public apology for the Christian religion. Let every soul be subject to the supreme powers - An admonition peculiarly needful for the Jews. Power, in the singular number, is the supreme authority; powers are they who are invested with it. That is more readily acknowledged to be from God than these. The apostle affirms it of both. They are all from God, who constituted all in general, and permits each in particular by his providence. The powers that be are appointed by God - It might be rendered, are subordinate to, or, orderly disposed under, God; implying, that they are God's deputies or vicegerents and consequently, their authority being, in effect, his, demands our conscientious obedience.

2. Whosoever resisteth the power - In any other manner than the laws of the community direct. Shall receive condemnation - Not only from the magistrate, but from God also.

3. For rulers are - In the general, notwithstanding some particular exceptions. A terror to evil works - Only. Wouldest thou then not be afraid - There is one fear which precedes evil actions, and deters from them: this should always remain. There is another fear which follows evil actions: they who do well are free from this.

4. The sword - The instrument of capital punishment, which God authorizes him to inflict.

5. Not only for fear of wrath - That is, punishment from man. But for conscience' sake - Out of obedience to God.

6. For this cause - Because they are the ministers (officers) of God for the public good. This very thing - The public good.

7. To all - Magistrates. Tribute - Taxes on your persons or estates. Custom - For goods exported or imported. Fear - Obedience. honour - Reverence. All these are due to the supreme power.

8. From our duty to magistrates he passes on to general duties. To love one another - An eternal debt, which can never be sufficiently discharged; but yet if this be rightly performed, it discharges all the rest. For he that loveth another - As he ought. Hath fulfilled the whole law - Toward his neighbour.

9. If there be any other - More particular. Commandment - Toward our neighbour; as there are many in the law. It is summed up in this - So that if you was not thinking of it, yet if your heart was full of love, you would fulfil it.

10. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law - For the same love which restrains from all evil, incites us to all good.

11. And do this - Fulfil the law of love in all the instances above mentioned. Knowing the season - Full of grace, but hasting away. That it is high time to awake out of sleep - How beautifully is the metaphor carried on! This life, a night; the resurrection, the day; the gospel

shining on the heart, the dawn of this day; we are to awake out of sleep; to rise up and throw away our night-clothes, fit only for darkness, and put on new; and, being soldiers, we are to arm, and prepare for fight, who are encompassed with so many enemies. The day dawns when we receive faith, and then sleep gives place. Then it is time to rise, to arm, to walk, to work, lest sleep steal upon us again. Final salvation, glory, is nearer to us now, than when we first believed - It is continually advancing, flying forward upon the swiftest wings of time. And that which remains between the present hour and eternity is comparatively but a moment.

13. Banqueting - Luxurious, elegant feasts.

14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ - Herein is contained the whole of our salvation. It is a strong and beautiful expression for the most intimate union with him, and being clothed with all the graces which were in him. The apostle does not say, Put on purity and sobriety, peacefulness and benevolence; but he says all this and a thousand times more at once, in saying, Put on Christ. And make not provision - To raise foolish desires, or, when they are raised already, to satisfy them.

XIV

1. Him that is weak - Through needless scruples. Receive - With all love and courtesy into Christian fellowship. But not to doubtful disputations - About questionable points.

2. All things - All sorts of food, though forbidden by the law.

3. Despise him that eateth not - As over-scrupulous or superstitious. Judge him that eateth - As profane, or taking undue liberties. For God hath received him - Into the number of his children, notwithstanding this.

5. One day above another - As new moons, and other Jewish festivals. Let every man be fully persuaded - That a thing is lawful, before he does it.

6. Regardeth it to the Lord - That is, out of a principle of conscience toward God. To the Lord he doth not regard it - He also acts from a principle of conscience. He that eateth not - Flesh. Giveth God thanks - For his herbs.

7. None of us - Christians, in the things we do. Liveth to himself - Is at his own disposal; doeth his own will.

10. Or why dost thou despise thy brother - Hitherto the apostle as addressed the weak brother: now he speaks to the stronger.

11. As I live - An oath proper to him, because he only possesseth life infinite and independent. It is Christ who is here termed both Lord and God; as it is he to whom we live, and to whom we die. Every tongue shall confess to God - Shall own him as their rightful Lord; which shall then only be accomplished in its full extent. The Lord grant we may find mercy in that day; and may it also be imparted to those who have differed from us! yea, to those who have censured and condemned us for things which we have done from a desire to please him, or refused to do from a fear of offending him. [Isaiah xlv, 23](#)

13. But judge this rather - Concerning ourselves. Not to lay a stumblingblock - By moving him to do as thou doest, though against his conscience. Or a scandal - Moving him to hate or judge thee.

14. I am assured by the Lord Jesus - Perhaps by a particular Revelation. That there is nothing - Neither flesh nor herbs. Unclean of itself - Unlawful under the gospel.

15. If thy brother is grieved - That is, wounded, led into sin. Destroy not him for whom Christ died - So we see, he for whom Christ died may be destroyed. With thy meat - Do not value thy meat more than Christ valued his life.

16. Let not then your good and lawful liberty be evil spoken of - By being offensive to others.

17. For the kingdom of God - That is, true religion, does not consist in external observances. But in righteousness - The image of God stamped on the heart; the love of God and man, accompanied with the peace that passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18. In these - Righteousness, peace, and joy. Men - Wise and good men.

19. Peace and edification are closely joined. Practical divinity tends equally to peace and to edification. Controversial divinity less directly tends to edification, although sometimes, as they of old, we cannot build without it, [Neh. iv, 17](#).

20. The work of God - Which he builds in the soul by faith, and in the church by concord. It is evil to that man who eateth with offense - So as to offend another thereby.

21. Thy brother stumbleth - By imitating thee against his conscience, contrary to righteousness. Or is offended - At what thou doest to the loss of his peace. Or made weak - Hesitating between imitation and abhorrence, to the loss of that joy in the Lord which was his strength.

22. Hast thou faith - That all things are pure? Have it to thyself before God - In circumstances like these, keep it to thyself, and do not offend others by it. Happy is he that condemneth not himself - By an improper use of even innocent things! and happy he who is free from a doubting conscience! He that has this may allow the thing, yet condemn himself for it.

23. Because it is not of faith - He does not believe it lawful and, in all these cases, whatsoever is not of faith is sin - Whatever a man does without a full persuasion of its lawfulness, it is sin to him.

XV

1. We who are strong - Of a clearer judgment, and free from these scruples. And not to please ourselves - Without any regard to others.
2. For his good - This is a general word: edification is one species of good.
3. But bore not only the infirmities, but reproaches, of his brethren; and so fulfilled that scripture. [Psalm lxix, 9](#)
4. Aforetime - In the Old Testament. That we through patience and consolation of the scriptures may have hope - That through the consolation which God gives us by these, we may have patience and a joyful hope.
5. According to the power of Christ Jesus.
6. That ye - Both Jews and gentiles, believing with one mind, and confessing with one mouth.
7. Receive ye one another - Weak and strong, with mutual love.
8. Now I say - The apostle here shows how Christ received us. Christ Jesus-Jesus is the name, Christ the surname. The latter was first known to the Jews; the former, to the gentiles. Therefore he is styled Jesus Christ, when the words stand in the common, natural order. When the order is inverted, as here, the office of Christ is more solemnly considered. Was a servant - Of his Father. Of the circumcision - For the salvation of the circumcised, the Jews. For the truth of God - To manifest the truth and fidelity of God.
9. As it is written - In the eighteenth Psalm, here the gentiles and Jews are spoken of as joining in the worship of the God of Israel. [Psalm xviii, 49](#)
10. [Deut. xxxii, 43.](#)
11. [Psalm cxvii, 1.](#)
12. There shall be the root of Jesse - That kings and the Messiah should spring from his house, was promised to Jesse before it was to David. In him shall the gentiles hope - Who before had been "without hope," [Eph. ii, 12.](#) [Isaiah xi, 10](#)
13. Now the God of hope - A glorious title of God, but till now unknown to the heathens; for their goddess Hope, like their other idols, was nothing; whose temple at Rome was burned by lightning. It was, indeed, built again not long after, but was again burned to the ground.
14. There are several conclusions of this Epistle. The first begins at this verse; the second, chap. xvi, 1; the third, chap. xvi, 17; the fourth, chap. xvi, 21; and the fifth, chap. xvi, 25; Ye are full of goodness - By being created anew. And filled with all knowledge - By long experience of the things of God. To admonish - To instruct and confirm.
15. Because of the grace - That is, because I am an apostle of the gentiles.
16. The offering up of the gentiles - As living sacrifices.
17. I have whereof to glory through Jesus Christ - All my glorying is in and through him.

18. By word - By the power of the Spirit. By deed - Namely, through "mighty signs and wonders."

20. Not where Christ had been named - These places he generally declined, though not altogether, having an holy ambition (so the Greek word means) to make the first proclamation of the gospel in places where it was quite unheard of, in spite of all the difficulty and dangers that attended it. Lest I should only build upon another man's foundation - The providence of God seemed in a special manner, generally, to prevent this, though not entirely, lest the enemies of the apostle, who sought every occasion to set light by him, should have had room to say that he was behind other apostles, not being sufficient for planting of churches himself, but only for preaching where others had been already; or that he declined the more difficult part of the ministry

21. [Isaiah lii, 15.](#)

22. Therefore I have been long hindered from coming to you - Among whom Christ had been named.

23. Having no longer place in these parts - Where Christ has now been preached in every city.

24. Into Spain - Where the gospel had not yet been preached. If first I may be somewhat satisfied with your company - How remarkable is the modesty with which he speaks! They might rather desire to be satisfied with his. Somewhat satisfied - Intimating the shortness of his stay; or, perhaps, that Christ alone can thoroughly satisfy the soul.

26. The poor of the saints that are in Jerusalem - It can by no means be inferred from this expression, that the community of goods among the Christians was then ceased. All that can be gathered from it is, that in this time of extreme dearth, [Acts xi, 28, 29](#), some of the church in Jerusalem were in want; the rest being barely able to subsist themselves, but not to supply the necessities of their brethren.

27. It hath pleased them; and they are their debtors - That is, they are bound to it, in justice as well as mercy. Spiritual things - By the preaching of the gospel. Carnal things - Things needful for the body.

28. When I have sealed to them this fruit - When I have safely delivered to them, as under seal, this fruit of their brethren's love. I will go by you into Spain - Such was his design; but it does not appear that Paul went into Spain. There are often holy purposes in the minds of good men, which are overruled by the providence of God so as never to take effect. And yet they are precious in the sight of God.

30. I beseech you by the love of the Spirit - That is, by the love which is the genuine fruit of the Spirit. To strive together with me in your prayers - He must pray himself, who would have others strive together with him in prayer. Of all the apostles, St. Paul alone is recorded to desire the prayers of the faithful for himself. And this he generally does in the conclusions of his Epistles; yet not without making a difference. For he speaks in one manner to them

whom he treats as his children, with the gravity or even severity of a father, such as Timothy, Titus, the Corinthians, and Galatians; in another, to them whom he treats rather like equals, such as the Romans, Ephesians, Thessalonians, Colossians, Hebrews.

31. That I may be delivered - He is thus urgent from a sense of the importance of his life to the church. Otherwise he would have rejoiced "to depart, and to be with Christ." And that my service may be acceptable - In spite of all their prejudices; to the end the Jewish and gentile believers may be knit together in tender love.

32. That I may come to you - This refers to the former, With joy - To the latter, part of the preceding verse.

XVI

1. I commend unto you Phebe - The bearer of this letter. A servant - The Greek word is a deaconess. Of the church in Cenchrea - In the apostolic age, some grave and pious women were appointed deaconesses in every church. It was their office, not to teach publicly, but to visit the sick, the women in particular, and to minister to them both in their temporal and spiritual necessities.

2. In the Lord - That is, for the Lord's sake, and in a Christian manner. St. Paul seems fond of this expression.

4. Who have for my life, as it were, laid down their own necks - That is, exposed themselves to the utmost danger. But likewise all the churches of the gentiles - Even that at Rome, for preserving so valuable a life.

5. Salute the church that is in their house - Aquila had been driven from Rome in the reign of Claudius, but was now returned, and performed the same part there which Caius did at Corinth, ver. 23. Where any Christian had a large house, there they all assembled together though as yet the Christians at Rome had neither bishops nor deacons. So far were they from any shadow of papal power. Nay, there does not appear to have been then in the whole city any more than one of these domestic churches. Otherwise there can be no doubt but St. Paul would have saluted them also. Epenetus - Although the apostle had never been at Rome, yet had he many acquaintance there. But here is no mention of Linus or Cemens; whence it appears, they did not come to Rome till after this. The firstfruits of Asia - The first convert in the proconsular Asia.

7. Who are of note among the apostles - They seem to have been some of the most early converts. Fellowprisoners - For the gospel's sake.

9. Our fellowlabourer - Mine and Timothy's, verse 21.

11. Those of the family of Aristobulus and Narcissus, who are in the Lord - It seems only part of their families were converted. Probably, some of them were not known to St. Paul by face, but only by character. Faith does not create moroseness, but courtesy, which even the gravity of an apostle did not hinder.

12. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa - Probably they were two sisters.

13. Salute Rufus - Perhaps the same that is mentioned, [Mark xv, 21](#). And his mother and mine - This expression may only denote the tender care which Rufus's mother had taken of him.

14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, &c. - He seems to join those together, who were joined by kindred, nearness of habitation, or any other circumstance. It could not but encourage the poor especially, to be saluted by name, who perhaps did not know that the apostle had ever heard of them. It is observable, that whilst the apostle forgets none who are worthy, yet he adjusts the nature of his salutation to the degrees of worth in those whom he salutes.

15. Salute all the saints - Had St. Peter been then at Rome, St. Paul would doubtless have saluted him by name; since no one in this numerous catalogue was of an eminence comparable to his. But if he was not then at Rome, the whole Roman tradition, with regard to the succession of their bishops, fails in the most fundamental article.

16. Salute one another with an holy kiss - Termed by St. Peter, "the kiss of love," [1 Pet. v, 14](#). So the ancient Christians concluded all their solemn offices; the men saluting the men, and the women the women. And this apostolical custom seems to have continued for some ages in all Christian churches.

17. Mark them who cause divisions - Such there were, therefore, at Rome also. Avoid them - Avoid all unnecessary intercourse with them.

18. By good words - Concerning themselves, making great promises. And fair speeches - Concerning you, praising and flattering you. The harmless - Who, doing no ill themselves, are not upon their guard against them that do.

19. But I would have you - Not only obedient, but discreet also. Wise with regard to that which is good - As knowing in this as possible. And simple with regard to that which is evil - As ignorant of this as possible.

20. And the God of peace - The Author and Lover of it, giving a blessing to your discretion. Shall bruise Satan under your feet - Shall defeat all the artifices of that sower of tares, and unite you more and more together in love.

21. Timotheus my fellowlabourer - Here he is named even before St. Paul's kinsmen. But as he had never been at Rome, he is not named in the beginning of the epistle.

22. I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you - Tertius, who wrote what the apostle dictated, inserted this, either by St. Paul's exhortation or ready permission. Caius - The Corinthian, [1 Cor. i, 14](#). My host, and of the whole church - Who probably met for some time in his house.

23. The chamberlain of the city - Of Corinth.

25. Now to him who is able - The last words of this epistle exactly answer the first, chapter i, 1-v, chap. i, 1-v, in particular, concerning the power of God, the gospel, Jesus Christ, the scriptures, the obedience of faith, all nations. To establish you - Both Jews and gentiles. According to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ - That is, according to the tenor of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which I preach. According to the Revelation of the mystery - Of the calling of the gentiles, which, as plainly as it was foretold in the Prophets, was still hid from many even of the believing Jews.

26. According to the commandment - The foundation of the apostolical office. Of the eternal God - A more proper epithet could not be. A new dispensation infers no change in God. Known unto him are all his works, and every variation of them, from eternity. Made known to all nations - Not barely that they might know, but enjoy it also, through obeying the faith.

27. To the only wise God - Whose manifold wisdom is known in the church through the gospel, [Eph. iii, 10](#). "To him who is able," and, to the wise God," are joined, as [1 Cor. i, 24](#), where Christ is styled "the wisdom of God," and "the power of God." To him be glory through Christ Jesus forever - And let every believer say, Amen!