

APOSTLE PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

COMMENTARY -- EXEGESIS

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EXEGESIS OF ROMANS

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

By:
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INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

Romans fitly comes first in the series of Paul's letters. He had looked forward to a purposed visit to that city, and this book dramatically gives a disclosure of his mind. It is the greatest of his writings in importance. It is the most characteristic and comprehensive, and the best suited to form an introduction to his teaching.

The Epistle to the Romans is at the very heart of the Apostle's teaching. It is the greatest literary product of his life's most strenuous period and of his highest powers. Behind and beyond the Christians in Rome he sees in thought the countless millions of the Gentile world unsaved. Equally with Israel they know and own a moral law, and recognize their inability to keep it. Towards them, also, he would fain to fulfill his apostleship.

DISCUSSION:

I THE CHURCH AT ROME

1. Communication was constant between Rome and Jerusalem.
“All roads led to Rome – and all roads led away from Rome.” The Jews in Rome were numbered by the thousands. They occupied a large ward of the city, beyond the Tiber. And they had ceaseless communications with Jerusalem. There were Roman Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. And even if they did not return to Rome, there must have been many visitors who did.

If Christianity came through such a channel, we should expect it to have originated in the synagogue at Rome. But if the church originated in the synagogue at Rome, the connection had been completely severed by the time Paul wrote. The Epistle itself gives no direct evidence of any such connection (Acts 28:17-22).

2. Origin of the Church
The date of the introduction of Christianity into Rome cannot be determined. The Epistle reveals nothing of the organization of the Church at Rome. But a Christian community existed at the time of the arrival of Paul (Acts 28:15). In 58 A.D. Paul addressed his epistle to this Christian community. The Christians depended upon mutual exhortation and instruction. The Church did not owe its origin to Paul and Peter, but it owed to them its first existence as an organized whole.

Many scholars have sought a Gentile-Christian origin for the Church. Communication was constant between Rome and all the East, and especially all the great towns. Also early Christianity was largely self-propagating. Acts 8:4, “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the Word.” “The Word” is constantly used of missionary journeys. Hord speaks of “A process of quiet and as it were fortuitous filtration”. It was probably by such a process, initiated, suspended, and renewed on different occasions, that the new religion was introduced to Rome.

3. Character of the Church
The traditional opinion was that the Church consisted of Gentile Christians. In 1876, Weizacker argued that the great mass of the Church were Gentile Christians, though there was a Jewish-Christian minority. Then Beyschlag presented a theory showing that the Church consisted mainly of proselytes – that is persons who were Gentiles by birth, but had passed through the Jewish religion. This explains the great difficulty of the Epistle. For Paul addresses his readers as if they were Gentiles, but argues with them as if they were Jews. Paul tried to elevate the audience to his

own standpoint.

II THE INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE – Its purity, moral soundness, and uprightness

1. The clearest Gospel of all

Romans gives us the Gospel in its wide context. It was Martin Luther's judgment that this Epistle sets forth the Gospel more clearly than any other writing in the New Testament. But since his time we have not lacked voices that have declared that he is guilty of overstatement. For belief in Christ is assumed by the Gospels as well as by Paul. The Gospels are a witness to Christ, born of faith in Him and aiming to evoke in others the same faith. But Paul fixed the content of that faith more clearly and sincerely. It is the same Gospel.

The Epistle to the Romans has in a peculiar way been able to supply the impulse for the renewal of Christianity. When man has slipped away from the Gospel, a deep study of Romans has often been the means by which the lost has been recovered. What the content of the Christian faith is, one learns to know in the Epistle to the Romans as in no other place in the New Testament.

2. Genuineness

It testifies to itself. A mighty mind and equally a great heart live in every page. A soul exquisitely sensitive and always intent upon truth and holiness live in every page. There is a consciously personated authorship going along with high moral principle and purpose. It is the supreme self-revelation of the Apostle.

3. Fellowship

A new kind of fellowship with God has appeared. It is a fellowship with God in which God and His work stand at the center. We are dealing with a work of God. Jesus preached the coming of the Kingdom of God. Mark 1:15, "The Kingdom of God is at Hand." The "new age" stands at the door. With Jesus the Messianic age has arrived. With the coming of the Kingdom of God is also given a new righteousness.

4. Righteousness from God.

This is the fundamental concept of the Epistle. Root out all carnal wisdom and righteousness. The whole Epistle is a clarification of the contents of this "righteousness from God". "The righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith". Christ's disciples hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). They have the righteousness by virtue of which they can stand before God. God's righteousness can become man's possession only in that he receives it as a gift from God. The inner content of that righteousness is through faith. It is through faith that a man is justified before God. To give up his attitude to the Law as the way of righteousness was a sacrifice which was required of Paul, and not a heavy burden, which he cast off with satisfaction and release.

III THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

1. The Occasion

We gather from Romans 15:19 that Paul was in the act of closing his work in the East. He was looking definitely Westward. But he was first about to revisit Jerusalem with his collection, mainly made in Macedonia and Achaia, for the "poor saints" (Romans 15:25-26). Paul's heart was set on further labors, but he was conscious of the uncertainties of the future. His thoughts

had long gone toward Rome (Acts 19:21). He had always aimed at large centers. Now he wanted to work in Spain, and probably he wanted to have Rome as the home base for that work as Antioch had been in his past work.

Then the Roman mission was on one side eminently Gentile. But on the other there was a strong Judaic element in Roman life. There were converts from paganism, and converts from native Judaism. And in many minds both traditions were working at once. On the one hand they would greatly need guidance on the significance of the past of Israel and on the destiny of the chosen race in the future. Then there was need for wise treatment on the ever-recurring problems raised by ceremonial rules in common daily life. His writing shows everywhere his sense of the presence of the Judaic problem.

2. Date and place of writing Epistle

We may date Romans just before the visit to Jerusalem narrated in Acts 20. The year may be fixed with great probability as 58 A.D. With confidence we may name Corinth as the place of writing. Gaius was Paul's host at the time (Romans 16:23). And he appears to be the same Gaius whom Paul had baptized at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:14), who was a Corinthian living at Corinth.

3. As to purpose as to some it is dogmatic.

Paul asserts his opinion as if it were a fact. Romans is a formal exposition of the Gospel according to Paul. It is a doctrinal treatise. Hilgenfeld calls Romans "a complete presentation of the Gospel which Paul preaches among the Gentiles." Pfeiderer speaks of it as "an objective development of the truth of the Gospel, drawn from the nature of the Gospel itself."

This opinion ruled at the time of the Reformation. Luther found the Gospel in Romans. He found it in a power which made him the greatest conductor of spiritual force since Paul. And he was instrumental in regenerating one-half of Christendom, and indirectly did much to reform the other half. Luther found a theology which did not philosophize about the mysteries of the Trinity, or the modes of the Incarnation, or active and passive creation. But through sin and law and grace gave the knowledge of Christ and His benefits.

4. According to others the purpose of the Epistle is controversial.

To some it is the nature of a dispute and debate. They say it is an exposition of Paul's Gospel indeed, but not a purely dogmatic one. It is not so much an exposition as a defense and a vindication. The exposition throughout is conducted with reference to an attack such as would be made on Pauline Christianity from the point of view of Judaism, or even of Jewish Christianity. This idea governs many interpretations.

But we must remember that Paul explains his Gospel. His aggressive argument has a permanent significance. He is stating the case of the Gospel against all that is pre-Christian, infra-Christian, and anti-Christian. It is addressed to men, and to Christians of all time. Religion begins absolutely on God's side. It begins with a demonstration of God's love to the sinful, which man has done nothing and can do nothing to merit. The only good man is the forgiven man.

5. According to others the purpose is conciliatory.

It tends to draw together, to gain the good will of, to reconcile, to unite. Even controversy may be conducted in a conciliatory tone, and with a conciliatory purpose. When Paul wrote he was extremely anxious about the unity of the Jew and Gentile in the Church. His journey to Jerusalem had mainly that in view. In the Epistle there is nothing that is personal in feeling. There is no uncontrolled passion such as flashes out here and there in Galatians.

He describes the Law as holy, spiritual, and ordained unto life. His aim is for the peace and unity of the Church (Romans 14-15). He speaks with passionate affection of the Jews (Romans 9:1ff). He always recognizes their historical prerogatives. He warns the Gentiles against self-exaltation over them, and anticipates the salvation of the whole.

6. Paul aims at an establishment of principles.

It is an Epistle, not a book. He knew something about the Church – as chapters 14-15 show. He might have acquired such information from members he met at Corinth, Ephesus, or elsewhere. From chapter 16, it is quite probable that he had friends at Rome itself. He wrote to the particular community, and under a particular impulse. He wrote to the Roman Christians because it was in his mind to visit them. The nature of his letter is determined, not simply by consideration of their necessities, but by consideration of his own position.

The Epistle is “occasional” in the sense that it had a historical motive. It was to prepare for the coming visit. It is in a real sense a systematic exposition of what he distinctively calls “my Gospel” (Romans 2:16). He advances step by step, and at every step he defines the Christian truth as against some false or defective view. He is vindicating the Truth. The whole of his Gospel is the doctrine of justification by faith. Justification regenerates, and nothing else does.

IV MAIN TEACHINGS OF THE EPISTLE

1. The doctrine of Man

Man is aware, as a spiritual being, of the eternal difference of right and wrong. He is aware of the witness of creation to personal “eternal power and Godhead” as its cause. And he is responsible in an awe-inspiring way for his unfaithfulness to such knowledge. He is a being great enough to be in personal moral relation with God, and able to realize his ideal only in true relation with God. Therefore his sin and guilt have an unfathomable evil in them. God alone, in sovereign mercy, provides for his pardon by the propitiation of Christ, and for his restoration by union with Christ in the life given by the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, man is a being actually in the midst of life of duty and trial. He is a member of civil society with obligations to its order. He does not live in a God-forsaken world. Man's new life, the “mind of the Spirit” in him, is to show itself in a conduct and character good for the state and for society at large, as well as for the “brotherhood”.

2. The doctrine of God

Paul presents God as an absolute in will and power. God is the sole author of nature, and the eternal and ultimate sole cause of goodness in man. To God in the last resort all is due. Paul's purpose is to constrain the actual believer to see the whole causation of his salvation in the will and power of God whose inmost character is revealed in the supreme fact that, “for us all, He spared not his Son”.

3. The doctrine of the Son of God

The Son of God is the sacrifice of peace for us (Romans 3). He had put Himself in relation with us as the willing worker of the Father's purpose of love. In chapter 4, the man who believes on Him, relies on Him, gives himself over to His mercy, is not only forgiven but “justified”. Justification is not merely the remission of a penalty but a welcome to the offender. He is pronounced to be lawfully at peace with the eternal holiness and love. The relation of the Son to creation is implied in chapter 8, while His Godhead is fully recognized in chapter 9.

Union with Christ is the central doctrine of all. Lightfoot says, "He is the apostle not primarily of justification, or of liberty, great as these truths are with him, but of union with Christ." It is through union that justification is ours. It is through union that spiritual liberty and power are ours. The Spirit of life is from the Head to the member.

4. The doctrine of the Spirit of God

No writing of the New Testament, but Saint John's Gospel, is so full upon this great theme as Romans. Chapter 8 reveals Personality as well as power. In chapter 7 we have the struggles of conscience and will over the awful problem of the "bondage" of in-dwelling sin. The Spirit is the Divine solution to inward evil.

5. The doctrine of duty

This Epistle is eminently a message of salvation. But it is also a treasury of principle and precept for the life of duty. It lays down the sovereign freedom of our acceptance for Christ's sake alone. Our pardon is not an isolated fact. The pardon becomes ours as we receive, not one truth about Christ, but as we receive. We receive His life as our true life. Chapters 12 and onward present large ranges of the law of duty, civil, social, personal, embracing duties to the state, loyalty to its laws, etc.

6. The doctrine of Israel

Paul appears as the predictive prophet. He states a mystery, and announces its issues. The promises to Israel have never failed, nor have they been canceled. The time is coming when "all Israel shall be saved", with a salvation which shall in turn be new life to the world outside Israel. Throughout the passage Paul speaks as having revealed to him a vast and definite prospect, in the Divine purposes.

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PAUL'S OBLIGATION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME

Romans 1:1-15

“To bring about obedience to the faith among all the Gentiles.”

By:
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PAUL'S OBLIGATION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME

Romans 1:1-15

“The Gospel is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.”

INTRODUCTION:

Paul writes as a messenger of long-expected good news from God. The promised Son of David's race according to the flesh has at last been born and lived His life. By resurrection from the dead He has been supernaturally shown to be the Son of God according to the Spirit. This good news it is a sacred duty to tell both to Greeks and to the rest of the world. The Apostle emphasizes his commission. He also emphasizes the greatness of the Person whose servant he is and who is the center of his message.

DISCUSSION:

I DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS GOSPEL (1:1-2)

1. The Apostle title

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.” *Doulos* – a devoted servant or minister. One pledged to serve. So servant denotes one who is devoted to a special work for God. There are two things which induce Paul to such expression. First, he must introduce himself in a way not necessary elsewhere. Second, he must make clear what right he has to claim the Church's attention. So he refers to the grace given to him and to his apostleship. These lay upon him a special responsibility to bring the Gospel to the Church in Rome. He is under obligation to Christ. He comes on behalf of his Lord and by His commission – “The servant of Jesus Christ”. It is this sense of obligation which makes the “*Doulos*” perfect freedom.

“A servant of Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ – for Paul the Christ-concept had a vital meaning. The Messiah whom Israel had awaited for centuries had now come, and the messianic age with Him. God's greatest miracle had occurred. And Paul had been appointed by God to proclaim this fact. Christ is Lord, and Paul is His bond-servant. God has given Christ the name reserved for God Himself. The all-commanding task thereafter was to tell all the world the message about the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. An Apostle's work

“Called to be an apostle.” *Apostolos* – one sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission. Apostle. God had called him especially for the task. He had a compelling consciousness of his election as being a direct call from Christ. Paul ranked with the Twelve. “But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and called me through His grace” (Galatians 1:15). We have here his sense of election.

3. How he did it

“Set apart for the Gospel of God.” God chose him for a special work. This was one of the things that carried him on in his work. As a Pharisee he had set himself apart for the Law. But now God had set him apart for something entirely different.

“For the Gospel of God.” He realized the power of the Gospel. The Gospel which comes from God. God is the Source and Author of the Gospel. The Gospel is the proclamation of the

Christian religion. The Gospel is the great new reality which God has now brought to us. So Paul was an entire devotee to the Gospel. Heart and conscience and intellect told him that it was Divine.

4. The Gospel is the fulfillment of hopes which God inspired (1:2)
It does not come without preparation. It comes as the fulfillment of promises given earlier. What had once been a promise has now become a reality. God promised it before through His prophets. So it is not in principle a new thing. The Old Testament as a whole is prophetic of the New Testament. And it is in the Old Testament that Paul finds promises of the Gospel.

Paul held fast to the Old Testament as God's own revelation. Jehovah is the living and active God. And by His activity He brings forth that which is new. He is the same God that speaks in both situations – the Old Testament and New Testament. The promise and the Gospel point to each other. The Gospel is the accomplishment of the promises.

For illustration read I Corinthians 15:3, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.” It was the facts that opened their eyes to the meaning of the Scriptures. The death and burial are affirmed in the aorist tense – as pointed historical events. The resurrection is put with emphasis in the perfect – as an abiding power. In His case restoration to life ensued. This was vital to Paul.

II WARM AND HIGH PRAISE OF THE GOSPEL (1:3-7)

1. The subject of the Gospel of God is His Son (1:3)
“The Gospel concerning His Son.” The Gospel has a single center around which all revolves. From beginning to end it treats the Son of God. The Law speaks about man and what he must do. The Gospel speaks about God and what He has done by sending His Son into the world. It is the Gospel about the Son of God.

“Who was descended from David according to the flesh.” The Davidic descent is an essential part of the Pauline Gospel. But those who did not directly see in Jesus one transcendently greater than David would not recognize in Him the Savior.

2. Paul's intent is to make clear the content of the Gospel (1:4)
He shows what it is that we possess in the fact that Christ was given. “Designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness.” According to His human nature He was the seed of David. According to His divine nature He is the Son of God. The great demonstration of this is His resurrection from the dead. “Son of God in power” was certified to Him by His resurrection. Through Christ God permitted something utterly new to enter the world. The divine glory, which formerly was hidden, was manifest after the Resurrection. From that hour He is the Son of God in Glory and fullness of power.

“By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.” The resurrection declared Jesus to be what He truly was. To Paul the resurrection of Christ is God's mightiest act. Ephesians 1:19-21 gives Paul's clear view of this. “The resurrection of Christ” points to an event at a single point in history. “From the dead” means that He was removed from the community of the dead. His resurrection exemplifies and guarantees that of others. Christ is established in that dignity which is His, and which answers to His nature.

Through Christ the resurrection age has burst upon us. The resurrection is the frontier over which

Christ passed to the status of the Son of God in power. For Paul the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of the resurrection of the dead. "He who hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." (John 5:24). Paul, too, could say that. In Christ we are the children of the resurrection. As Adam's death meant death for all his race, so Christ's resurrection means resurrection for those who through Him have become members of the new age. The resurrection has thus already begun. If Christ did not rise nothing real and momentous has happened to transform the world (I Corinthians 15).

Christ became the Son of God in power. The resurrection is the turning point in the existence of the Son of God. It is also the turning point in humanity's existence. Before this the whole race was under the sovereign sway of death. But in the resurrection of Christ life burst forth victoriously. The resurrection is the starting point for a new age and a new humanity.

3. Through Christ Paul received grace and apostleship (1:5)

This grace is common to all Christians. In this particular passage it refers to a commission graciously devolved by God upon a human agent. A divinely-conferred endowment. *Apostolen* – apostleship, office of an apostle, duty of one sent as a messenger. *Apostolen* rests upon a specialized grace and implies competence as well as vocation. It is a man's "grace" which constitutes his "call" to any particular service in the church. Paul received his double call at one and the same time, by that one act and in that one revelation on the Damascus Road. It was from the Lord that Paul received grace and apostleship.

"To bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of His name among all the Gentiles." The Lord had chosen Paul for a special mission. His mission was to be to the Gentiles. His mission was inclusive in its outreach. He was to bring the Gentiles to faith in the Lord and obedience to Him. The object of the apostleship received through Christ is the obedience which consists in faith. Obedience is always required of man in his relation to God. Obedience means that one receives in faith that which God offers him for acceptance through Christ.

4. The "called" are those who have accepted the Divine invitation (1:6)

Kletoi – called to privileges or functions. It refers to the external and internal call. They are the partakers of Christ by the call. It is by the mercy of God that one becomes a member of the kingdom of Christ. "The called" is a technical designation for Christians. "Calling" includes obedience as well as hearing. It is effectual calling.

5. The persons to whom it is written (1:7)

"To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints." It is addressed to all who are in Rome. They are "God's beloved", because they have had experience of His redeeming love in Jesus Christ. *Agapetois* – beloved, worthy of love. Christ is God's beloved Son. In Christ God has intervened in to our existence and made it's condition entirely new.

Agiōis – Saints, members of the Christian community. Christians are saints in virtue of Christ's calling. The saints are God's people. "Saints" describes a certain relation to God. It is assumed in Scripture that the character of God's people will answer to their relation to Him. Christians are "saints" by virtue of God's call. They are set apart as God's own. Through God's call and election they have become members of God's holy people.

This benediction speaks of an actual sharing of a spiritual reality. Grace and peace here constitute a unity, giving inclusive expression to salvation in its fullness. It comes from God and it has to come to us through Jesus Christ. Paul wishes the Romans the source and the sum of all Christian

blessings from God.

III PAUL EXPLAINS HIS DESIRE TO VISIT THE ROMANS AND TO WORK AMONG THEM (1:8-15)

1. Paul expresses his strong interest in the Roman Church (1:8-9)

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.” Paul begins with thanksgiving to God, and that definitely for the Church at Rome. Paul speaks this with delight and triumph. Jesus Christ here must be conceived as the Mediator through whom all our approaches to God are made. The very existence of a church at Rome was something to be thankful for. A Church in Rome was like “a city set on a hill”.

“Because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.” “In all the world”, wherever Paul went on his far-reaching mission he heard about their faith. Paul thanked God that their faith was so well known. The fact that the Gospel had found its way to Rome and there had been received with faith was cause enough for Paul to thank God. In the capital of the world there was a Church that believed in Christ.

“For God is my witness.” He calls God to witness, which confirms his sincerity. Paul's ministry was spiritual and rendered with his spirit. At a distance he could not directly prove his love. But God knows that the Church at Rome has ever been in the Apostle's thoughts and prayers.

2. His long cherished desire to visit the Church at Rome (1:10-12)

“Asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.” His long cherished and often disappointed hope had taught Paul to say, “If the Lord will”. He knew that his journey to Jerusalem would be dangerous, but did not foresee that he would visit Rome as a prisoner.

“That I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.” So Paul explains his desire to go to Rome. His plans include Spain, but of that he says nothing as yet. No doubt, in substance, Paul imparts his spiritual gift through this Epistle. What he wished to do for the Romans was to further their comprehension of the purpose of God in Jesus Christ. This was a purpose the breadth and bearings of which were yet but imperfectly understood.

“That we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.” He hastens to add this. As the Lord's Apostle he has something to impart is the simple and inescapable fact. He too derives strength and comfort from their relationship. His desire is that he may be strengthened and cheered with them. Paul will not assume superiority.

3. The grounds of this desire (1:13-15)

“That I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.” He stresses the fact that he had long been willing, but it had not been God's will. Thus God had given him other tasks (Acts 19:21). The purpose was that he might obtain some fruit among them also. But the reason is greater than his own wish. His purpose was grounded in his vocation as Apostle to the Gentiles, and though it had been frustrated it had never been given up. Evangelistic work elsewhere had detained him.

“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians.” The fundamental reason was his consciousness of an inescapable duty. He felt under obligation to preach the Gospel to all men without distinction of language or culture. His aim was for both new converts, and for the

furtherance of the Christians in their new life.

“I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome.” Paul acknowledged the inclusive character of his responsibility. None are excepted therefrom. He professed his readiness to preach the Gospel. By virtue of such call and responsibility he wrote to prepare them for his coming. His one great task was “to bring about obedience to the faith among all the Gentiles.”

CONCLUSION:

It is an excellent thing to be ready to meet every opportunity of doing or getting good. Let us realize our oneness with Christ, and with Christ's people. Also let us realize our stewardship, and that the fulfillment of our stewardship may become freedom and gladness.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

February 22, 1951

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THE THEME OF ROMANS

Romans 1:16-17

“The main subject of the Epistle is righteousness by faith.”

By:
T. Paul Deaton
May 1, 1951

THE THEME OF ROMANS

Romans 1:16-17

“The main subject of the Epistle is righteousness by faith.”

INTRODUCTION:

The Gospel is the divine power whereby God brings salvation to all who have faith in Christ. It is the Gospel which works a moral miracle among men by proclaiming a state of acceptance with God. The Gospel is offered to all as a free gift, in the sole condition of faith. For in it is revealed that God accepts man as righteous solely on the condition of faith, as is shown in the Old Testament.

DISCUSSION:

I THE SPIRITUAL DELIVERANCE OF BELIEVERS (1:16)

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith.”

1. The Gospel.

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel.” In the Introduction he characterized the content and purpose of the Gospel. It is the great charter by which salvation is conveyed and made over to us. It shows us the way of salvation. Paul was proud to preach the Gospel anywhere. *Euaggelion* – the Gospel, good or joyful news, instruction in the Gospel.

2. The Gospel is the power of God.

Dunamis – Power, a manifestation of spiritual power. The Gospel is demonstrated by what it does. And looking to what it could do Paul was proud to preach it anywhere. The conception of the Gospel as a force pervades the epistles to the Corinthians. Its proof is dynamical, not logical. It is demonstrated by what it does. It is the means for rescuing sinners from the destruction which awaits them at the last Judgment.

3. The Gospel receives its power from Christ.

This is the power which God effected through Christ. The Gospel is the operation of power. God intervened with power for our salvation. When the Gospel is preached it is something that occurs. Whenever the Gospel is preached, the power of God is effective unto salvation. It is more than a mere utterance and the presentation of an idea. Paul had set himself apart for the Law, but God set him apart for the Gospel.

4. To whom does the Gospel become God's saving power?

“It is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith.” Faith is looked upon as a necessary condition required for salvation. To believe is simply to accept the Gospel and thereby to become participant in the new life in Christ. Even though salvation is wholly God's work and is offered to man without price, man must at least do what is required of him – he must believe what the Gospel proclaims.

“Faith is the indispensable and only condition for salvation.” For Paul faith is not something that man offers as the condition of his justification. Paul has no thought of apportioning to God and man respective contributions to salvation. For Paul faith is not a subjective quality which must be present in man if the Gospel is to be able to show its power. But one's faith is evidence that the

Gospel has exercised its power on him. It is not man's faith that gives the Gospel its power. But it is the power of the Gospel that makes it possible for one to believe. Faith is only another word for the fact that one belongs to Christ and through Him participates in the new age.

5. The Gospel gives both salvation and faith their precise meaning.
In the old age man stands under the powers of destruction. These powers rule in this world of sin and death. There is no possibility that he can do anything to set himself free. His whole course of life is under the control of these powers under which he lives. He is wholly surrendered to their might. Paul's view of man is the same as that expressed by Jesus: "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace," (Luke 11:21f). There cannot be deliverance and freedom unless "one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him." That is what has taken place through Christ. Christ is the strong one who has overcome the powers which held us prisoners. Salvation does not lie in the fact that certain thoughts and ideas are proclaimed to us and we then give them our loyalty and help them to victory. But salvation means that Christ, by the power of God, delivers us from the bondage of the old aeon and brings us into the new aeon [life or age]. This is what occurs through the Gospel. Thus to be removed from the realm of darkness and received into the kingdom of Christ is precisely what faith is. Faith is the heart's trust in the grace of God in Christ.
6. The Gospel is for all.
"To the Jew first and also to the Greek." It is the same Gospel on the same terms. But it is without prejudice to the historical prerogative of the Jew. Greek is here set in contrast with Jew. "Greek" has an inclusive meaning, signifying the Gentiles as a whole. It was more natural for Paul to use the word in that meaning, because the Hellenistic world represented the Gentiles to him. He sought to show that both Gentiles and Jews were under the wrath of God, and that salvation is offered to both through faith in Christ.

The Jews had God's revelation and had received His promises. God had entered into covenant with them. They had shared a holy history with Him. They had the Law of God and were zealous for righteousness. But the Gentiles had none of these. They were given over to unrighteousness. How completely unlike they were! The differences were real and deep. But they all vanish and are as nothing before the Gospel.

II GOD ACCEPTS MEN AS RIGHTEOUS SOLELY ON THE CONDITION OF FAITH (1:17)

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live,'".

1. The Gospel is a Divine saving power.
"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed." The righteousness of God is something without which a sinful man cannot be saved. The priority of the Jew was abolished with the coming of Christ. Faith makes the status of the Jew new, as well as that of the Gentile. Neither is preferred to the other. Paul was eager to make clear that salvation was the same for both. He denied that the Law is a power for salvation. Both are called through the promise to receive the new righteousness which God proffers through Christ.
2. The righteousness of God.
Here we have Paul's central idea. One's relation with God is right only if he fulfills God's requirements. The Gospel is concerned about the righteousness of God. Jesus said to his disciples: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20). But this is not man's own righteousness, but "the

righteousness of God". It does not originate in us and come into being through our works and our fulfillment of the Law. But it is a righteousness which God has effected for us through His work in Christ. The righteousness of God is a righteousness which God reveals to us and permits us to share. It is proffered to man and accepted by faith. It is an objective relationship into which we are received through faith in Christ.

3. A righteousness originating in God.
It is prepared by God. It is revealed in the Gospel and therein offered to us. In Christ it has come to us, and he who through faith belongs to Christ has it as his righteousness. So one is righteous because he belongs to Christ through faith. The righteousness of God is not a property resident in God, but God's mighty intervention into our existence, which results in a total change in its condition. It is a reality which God has raised up in our midst. It is a gift, not an achievement.
4. The Gospel and Faith belong together inseparably.
Revelation is an action on the part of God. It is a mighty manifestation of God's will. It is the Gospel which is primary, which creates faith and awakens it in us. Faith arises only through one's meeting with the Gospel. When one hears the Gospel and is conquered by it, that is faith. "Through faith for faith." Faith is both the beginning and the culmination. The great and wonderful gift which God gives us is Christ, and through faith in Him we become His and share the righteousness revealed through Him. Faith is connected with "the righteousness of God.:" But the central thought is about faith.
5. The righteousness which is by faith.
"He who through faith is righteous shall live." Confronted by the great Chaldean invasion, Habakkuk stood watch to see what the Lord had to say to him. And the Lord declared that the proud conqueror would fall; but also that "The righteous shall live by his faith," (Habakkuk 2:4). Since pride leads a people on to destruction, faithful devotion to God and His commands leads to life and safety.

Paul was brought up on rabbinic thought. The Prophet's reference to faith is interpreted to mean the just man's faithfulness and steadfastness in his righteous course. But Paul understood the prophet to mean that "he who through faith is righteous shall live." For he is speaking about the righteousness which is by faith. Paul wants to reinforce the fact that "he who through faith is righteous" shall live. This is what he understood Habakkuk to say.
6. Paul was not speaking of life in general.
"He who through faith is righteous shall live." It is of life in its eschatological sense that the affirmation is made. "Shall live" – Paul means that he is removed from death's realm and received into life's aeon, which God has brought near in Christ.

CONCLUSION:

It is faith which gains God's approval. Faith is believing acceptance of the Gospel. The righteousness leads to faith in the sense of saving reliance on Christ. In the revelation of God's righteousness for man's salvation every thing is of faith from first to last.

By:
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THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-32

“The wrath of God” signifies the total situation that obtains the lost condition where man has departed from God.

By:
T. Paul Deaton
May 8, 1951

THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-32

INTRODUCTION:

“Wrath” is the steadfast indignation of God against sin. To begin with, it may be said that “the wrath of God” is the same as His holy displeasure at sin. It means more than a passive discountenancing of sin. To Paul, the wrath of God was a terrifying reality. “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7). This idea about the wrath of God stands in indissoluble relation to his whole faith in God. As long as God is God, He cannot behold with indifference that His creation is destroyed and His holy will trodden underfoot. Therefore God meets sin with His mighty reaction.

PROPOSITION:

“The wrath of God” signifies the total situation that obtains the lost condition where man has departed from God.

DISCUSSION:

I THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE HEATHEN (1:18-23)

1. A wrong relation to God is the ultimate cause of man's corruption (1:18).
“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth.” The wrath of God is a divine dynamic, a power of God, unto destruction. It is the condemnation of the sinner by God, probably referring mainly to the final judgment. “Wrath” is God's active intervention against sin. It is a present reality that awaits complete fulfillment until the final revelation in eternity. Man's whole existence gets its character from the fact that he stands under the wrath of God.

The sinfulness of man is described. The two words – ungodliness and wickedness – is an emphatic expression of one and the same thing. It is just the fact of a wrong relationship with God.

God has not concealed the truth. Who suppress the truth by a wicked life. Men by their wickedness have not wanted to know the truth. In the interest of autonomy, man sought to cast off dependence on God. In the New Testament Truth is moral rather than speculative. It is truth of a sort which is held only as it is acted on. They held the truth as a captive or prisoner, that it should not influence them.

2. They had a revelation of God in nature and conscience (1:19-20).
God has not left Himself without a witness. “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.” God has made Himself known in His works. Ever since the creation of the world God has revealed His eternal power and deity. What is meant is the knowledge of God which is independent of such a special revelation as had been given to the Jews. There is enough known of God as the Supreme Being to lead man to glorify Him.

They might have had a knowledge of God. “Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” Ever since the creation of the world God's eternal

power and deity have been manifest and can be known by His works. Through His mighty works God has revealed Himself and appeared before them. God has made Himself known to them “that they may be without excuse.” According to Paul it is actually the will of God that he who turns away from God be without excuse. Man's failure is not that he has neglected to speculate about God. But his fault is rather that, however God has revealed Himself in His mighty works, man does not honor Him and thank Him as God. God's power and the totality of the Divine attributes constituting the Divine nature, are inevitably impressed on the mind of man by nature. There is that within man which so catches the meaning of all that is without as to issue in an instinctive knowledge of God. The knowledge involves duties.

3. They consciously turned from God to idolatry (1:21-23)

“For although they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him.” In these verses the wrong course taken by humanity is described. Paul believed that God is living and ceaselessly active. Ever since the creation He has been active in the life of man. Nature shows us that God is to be glorified and thanked. Nature reveals Him to be great and good. But men were not content to accept the impressions made on them by nature.

They became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. “They fell to reasoning upon it. In their self-willed reasonings their instinctive perception of God became confused and uncertain. They had a great deal of knowledge of general truths, but no prudence to apply them to particular cases. When they quitted the plain truth they disputed themselves into a thousand vain and foolish fancies. Their unintelligent heart, the seat of the moral consciousness, was darkened.

“Claiming to be wise, they became fools.” In asserting their wisdom they became fools, and showed it conspicuously in their idolatries. The goal that man finds in such manner is only an empty and vain idea, nothing more than an idol created in man's own image. It has been observed that some of the most refined nations have been the most unwise in religion. For illustration: The barbarians adored the sun and moon. The learned Egyptians worshiped an ox and an onion. The Grecians adored diseases and human passions. The Romans worshiped the furies. And the ingenious Chinese adored the devil. Thus the world by wisdom knew not God. The plain truth of the being of God could not content them.

“Exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images.” They resigned the glory of the incorruptible God, and took instead of Him some image of a corruptible, even of a vile creature. In His work God reveals His eternal power and glory. But in their empty religion God had become lost. Man can descend to nothing lower than to despise and dishonor God in His majesty by worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. It is evidence of man's deepest corruption.

II THE REACTION OF GOD'S WRATH (1:24-32)

1. God withdrew His beneficent restraints (1:24-25)

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.” Paul expresses the judicial action of God. God gave them up to the reign of their passions. The Apostle turns from this sin to its punishment. Because of it God gave them up. Even now in history God makes His wrath operative. When man does not turn to God, God punishes him by giving him up to sin. Punishment follows upon evil-doing, either in the form of present misfortune or as eternal banishment from God's fellowship. That fellowship is regarded as man's “greatest good.” To lose the connection with God involved in constantly

glorifying and giving Him thanks, is to sink into a abyss of darkness, intellectual and moral.

The incorruptible God had been resigned for the image of an animal. That debased the worship, and brought a Divine judgment upon the people. And their bodies were dishonored.

“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.” It is the corruption of man that is revealed in the non-Christian religions. They are a distortion of the truth, the direct opposite of the truth. They disregarded the Creator. “The truth about God” is the same as the true God as He had actually revealed Himself to man.

2. Both men and women became shameless (1:26-27)

“God gave them up to dishonorable passions.” They had first disregarded God, but next they perverted their own nature. They had committed error by going astray. God had taken off the bridle of restraining grace and left them to themselves. Now man had refused to understand the God that had made him, and thus became worse than the beasts. Those that dishonored God were given up to dishonor themselves.

“Men likewise – were consumed with passions for one another.” The ignoring or degrading of God is the first fatal step out of the way. It ends in this slough. Man becomes a vile creature when left to himself.

3. God gave them up to a mind that cannot stand trial (1:28-31)

They refused to retain the knowledge of God. The deepest meaning of unrighteousness is that man has turned away from God, that he did not seek God, and “did not see fit to acknowledge God.” And God punishes such doing by giving man up to sin. Sin itself disgraces man, and disturbs the human society. They would have none of God. So God in turn gave them up to a mind which is no mind and cannot discharge the functions of one. It was a mind in which the Divine distinctions of right and wrong were confused and lost . . . The reason and conscience were perverted. They had reached the last deep of evil. The words in verse 31 describe sins of rebellion against God. It describes acts of brutality.

4. Their depravity was deepened (1:32).

“Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.” Those who have turned away from God in unbelief and disobedience stand under the wrath of God because of their unrighteousness. When they turn to sin they follow their own choice. But they are by no means free, but doubly bound. It is God who gives man up to sin and commits him to the power of sin. He falls a prey to the forces of corruption.

The powers of destruction are listed as Wrath, Sin, Law, and Death. Sin is a universal power of corruption into whose might God in His wrath gives over the unrighteous man. The Law also stands over against the unrighteous. Man is not free. Sin is not something which a man has under control, so that he can choose for or against it. But it is a power which holds him in thralldom. A new status is possible only if God effects it, if God reveals His righteousness. It is that which God has done through Christ.

The people knew the sentence of God, but continued to practice to sins. And they gave whole-hearted assent to those who practiced the same sins. “Death” – a Divine sentence executed on sin. To be guilty of such things oneself is bad. But it is more brutal to give a cordial approval to them in others. Nature itself should have saved the people from such ignorance of God, and such misconception of Him. The vices were rampant, and it was Paul's judgment that the vices had a

real connection with the pagan religions.

CONCLUSION:

Paul had gathered his material from the idolatry and moral waywardness of the Gentiles. It was not his purpose to describe their morals and culture. But it was his purpose to say what it meant to stand under the wrath of God. To be pleased with other people's sins is to love sin for sin's sake.

By:

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THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW

Romans 2:1 – 3:20

The same principle underlies the judgment for Jew and Gentile

By:
T. Paul Deaton
March 18, 1952

THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW

Romans 2:1 – 3:20

INTRODUCTION:

In chapter one Paul showed that the Gentiles were under God's judgment on account of sin. Now he turns to the Jews. It is really the Jew who is addressed from the beginning of chapter two. In this passage (2:1-3:20) Paul shows that all men need salvation. Both Gentile and Jew have sinned, though God has given each a law of life. And each will be judged by the law he has (2:1-19). In spite of his privileges, the Jew needs salvation as much as the Gentile. His moral condition shows this (3:1-20).

God has taken pains to make known the great principles of His action. This permits men to know before hand how God will decide and act. The personal character of God's relations toward men is rapidly being forgotten by this generation. Yet, if God be God, He must be the Judge of all. Back of the whole revelation of His works and ways, in His Word, is God Himself. "God created man in His own image." Since we are persons, so is God. And since we have personal feelings, so has God. Now every creature stands in relation to God according to what God is. God cannot change.

PROPOSITION:

The same principle underlies the judgment for Jew and Gentile.

DISCUSSION:

I THE JEWS ARE ALSO WITHOUT EXCUSE (2:1-10)

1. Judging others (2:1-3)

"Therefore" – the thought here springs from that which has gone before. Because that which has been said about the Gentiles is also true as to the Jews, the Jew himself is without excuse when he judges. "O man" – refers to the Jews. Paul merely presents what the Jews themselves had said. "Judge another" – decision, opinion. "Same things" – the Jews were doing the same kind of things as the Gentiles, if not so glaring. Paul addresses himself to the Jew's manner of life. The Jew felt that he enjoyed an abiding advantage over the Gentile. He saw himself on God's side, assenting to God's judgment on the Gentile's sin. And in the exercise of that judgment the Jew felt very safe before God. But Paul reminded the Jew: "The fact that you pass judgment does not make you safe before God. But in the very fact that you agree in the judgment of unrighteousness of the Gentiles you have pronounced judgment on yourself too." The same principle on which the Gentile is condemned, that the Jew does evil in spite of better knowledge condemns him also. It was not that the Jew did the identical actions, but his conduct was the same. For his sin was against light. So the Sin of the Jews was the same, though their sins were not.

Kata alaythian – God's judgment squares with the facts. This is the whole rule of it in verse 2. "We know" – by reason and revelation. The Jews were self-condemned by the judgment passed on others. God's judgment is according to truth. God sees the facts, and the motives behind the facts, of the life of every creature.

God's is a true judgment. God judges men without distinction (2:3). The Jew is "the servant who knew his Lord's will, "and whose judgment will be most rigorous if it is neglected. But the Jew had thought that the privilege of his birth would of itself ensure his entrance into the kingdom.

This was his practical conviction, whatever might be his proper creed.

2. God's goodness and man's conduct in relation to it (2:4-5)

“Kindness – the kindness which disposes one to do good. The “forbearance” which suspends punishment. The “patience” which waits long before it actively interposes. Paul has the Jew and his legal righteousness in mind.

“Do you not know” – not acknowledging, or considering, willful ignorance. It amounts to contempt of God's goodness if a man does not know that its end is not to approve of his sins, but to lead him to repentance. For both Jew and Gentile stand under the same judgment under the same Divine wrath. “God's kindness is meant to lead you” – is designed to lead or draw you to repentance. “Repentance” – while God purposes a new life, man takes advantage of His mercy to live in sin.

Verse five shows the contrast of what happens with what God designs. Instead of falling in with God's purpose you are storing up wrath – “By your hard and impenitent heart”. We have here the cumulative character of continued impenitence. The hardened and impenitent sinner “lays up” during a prosperous earthly-life constant “treasures” of wrath, which will be revealed at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. “Day of wrath” – future inheritance of the wicked. The conception was quite definite: there was only one day in view. It is a day when God is revealed as a righteous Judge.

3. Judgment will have reference to moral conduct in view of the amount of light possessed (2:6-9).

It is an eternal law of God's relation to man that is found here. The third principle is according to works. It is the life as a whole, the life-choice, that is in question here. “Well-doing” – is subjection to and obedience to the light God has vouchsafed. It is set forth as a description of those to whom God does render life eternal. To Abel, “well-doing” meant approaching God by a sacrifice, as a sinner, as he had been taught to do. *Doxan* – the “glory” of the future life, as revealed in the Risen Savior. *Timen* – “Honor” with God. The goal of effort is nothing earthly.

There always have been choosers of God and rejecters of God (2:8-9). “Factious” – men of self-willed temper, using all arts to assert themselves against God. To those who pursue this course there accrues indignation and wrath. The result of this temper – carried into the spiritual world – is seen in disobedience to the truth and obedience to unrighteousness. “Wrath and fury” – the outburst in visitation of wrath stored up. “Tribulation and distress” – conscious experience of the effects of Divine anger. “Does evil” – who works at evil and works it out or accomplishes it. *Orgay* – wrath within. *Thumos* – wrath that overflows. “*Orgay*” takes the image of pressure. “*Thumos*” takes the image of confinement in a narrow space. The same idea is expressed in both, only intensified in the latter.

4. No respect of persons with God (2:10-11)

The Jew comes first, but it is only order that is involved. The same principle underlies the judgment for both the Jew and Gentile. Mere possession of the law does not count. Men are judged according to their works, whether they have or have not had such a special revelation of the Divine Will as was given to Israel. “God shows no partiality”. “Respect of persons” – regard for the outward circumstances of a man instead of his real character.

“Does good” – as fruit of faith. Privilege increases responsibility, in case of the Jew. God sees men through His own eyes of holiness and truth always.

II THE LAW DOES NOT PROTECT AGAINST THE WRATH OF GOD (2:12-24)

1. The responsibility of man (2:12-13)

There was only one Law given by God – the Mosaic Law. “All who have sinned without the law” – without a revealed law of right and wrong. “Law” – will of God for man's conduct. It refers to other law than the law of conscience. A law calls for practical obedience, not mere assent. The Jew counts it his greatest credit that he knows God and has the law. It is this fact that fills him with confidence and gives him a feeling of safety. He is aware that he knows the right way. And unlike the heathen he has not strayed away from God. In that sense he is righteous. Beyond that he trusts that God's leniency will overlook his failures.

Paul attacks the Jew's confidence (2:13). Paul is arguing against those who imagined that the mere possession of the law put them in a position of privilege as compared to those to whom it was not given. To know God and His will is not perfect righteousness. For the law every thing depends on performance. God is a just Judge.

2. Paul approaches the conscience of the Jew (2:14-16)

Ethne – “Gentiles as such”, persons who can be characterized as “without law”. There is no such thing as a man absolutely without the knowledge of God's will. (Verse 16 should precede verse 14.) “My Gospel” – the message I am commissioned to preach. Judgment by Christ is a distinctive doctrine of the Gospel. The thought of judgment is to keep the Christian alert. He must never forget that he must some day give account of his deeds before God. This verse is to be taken with the main verbs of the whole paragraph. The last judgment is an inescapable fact. It is only in the judgment that the creative and redemptive work of God comes to completion.

The Jew knows the law, and sins against knowledge. Therefore he will be judged by the law. His knowledge of the law takes away from him all excuse for his sin. The law cannot save him from doom. It is obedience, not to the letter, but to the spirit of the law that is availing.

But the Gentile too is without excuse. He will not be judged by the law; yet he will receive the proper reward for his deeds. “*Phusei*” – by nature, as distinct from the written law. Though the heathen does not have the law, he is not without knowledge of God's will. He can acknowledge the difference between right and wrong in his daily life. When the heathen acts in harmony with the law, his solidarity with the law is fully certified. The emphasis is on fulfilling the law.

“They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts.” That is the work which the law prescribes. Paul is talking about a particular situation. Paul believes in God as living and ever active with man in life's concrete situations showing him what is good and what is required of him. To the Apostle it was less than the great revelation of God's will, which had been interpreted to Israel, but nevertheless a true moral authority. Their conduct evinces the possession of a law written on the heart.

“Conscience” – the faculty by which we reflect upon the character of our actions. Reasonings of a man's mind upon his own actions, habits and motives. In this passage understanding rather than affection is the predominant motive. And conscience bears its testimony, though it be only an inward one, to the outward testimony borne by their conduct. The conscience may be more or less enlightened. It may become corrupt through sin, and give no light. Therefore a man's appeal to conscience is not decisive unless he has taken pains to inform it and keep it pure. “Thoughts” – the witness of conscience reflecting on conduct, as something added to the first instinctive consciousness of the nature of an action. Their thoughts bear witness to the existence of a law in them, and these thoughts exercise moral functions which imply the recognition of a law.

3. The Jew's mistake was that he put his trust in the law (2:17-20).
The Jew was orally instructed in the law. The name "Jew" is an honorable one. The mere possession of the Mosaic Law gave the Jew confidence. In virtue of being taught out of the law (in the synagogue and schools) the Jew possesses moral discernment. He does not sink to the mind which has lost all moral capacity. He could discriminate experimentally between good and evil. "Rely" – feeling secure of God's favor from the mere possession of the law. "Boast" – He, the object of thy worship; ye, the people of His special care.

"Approve" – able to distinguish delicately between the more and the less good. "Instructed" – able to discriminate. This is the point at which Paul has aimed from the beginning of the chapter. To know God and His will, to be instructed in the law so that one may judge what is best, these are beyond question something great and significant. So Paul uses the Jew's advantage as a background and emphasis for the contrast which he draws between knowing the law and keeping the law. The Jew's mistake was not that he prized the law and esteemed the knowledge of it a great advantage. It was right to thank God for that. But his mistake was that he put his trust in the law. It is not the law in which one should trust, for sin reigns despite the law (2:17-18).

(2:19-20), This confidence is the immediate and natural result of what precedes. The Jew is confident that the Gentiles must come to school to him. His confidence is based on the fact that he possesses in the law "the outline of knowledge and truth". In the law the knowledge and truth of God were incorporated bodily, he thought. "*Paideuten*" – a corrector – has reference to moral as well as to intellectual discipline. "*Aphronon*" – the foolish – persons without moral intelligence. "A teacher of children" – low in spiritual attainments. This outline of truth was ineffective in the Jew's conduct. It was the custom of the Jews to take a great deal of pains in teaching their children when they were young, and all their lessons were out of the law.

4. Example is better than precept (2:21-24).
Paul exposes the spirit and principles of Rabbinism, as proved in multitudes of lives. Does your character harmonize with your assumptions? Do you practice what you preach? The great wrong in the life of the Jew was that on the one hand, he "boasts of his relation to God, and boasts in the law". And on the other hand he "dishonors God by breaking the law". Such conduct helps those who do not know God to despise Him.

The question implies that the Jew breaks the law he would enforce on others. The Scripture quoted is Isaiah 52:5 – It was owing to the misery and helplessness of the people of God, in exile among the nations, that the heathen scoffed at the Divine Name. They said, "The God of Israel is not able to deliver His people: He is no God." But here Paul gives this passage quite another turn. Paul says, God is now blasphemed among the nations because of the inconsistency between the pretensions of the Jews and their behavior. As if the heathen were saying: "Like God, like people; what a Divinity the patron of this odious race must be."

III CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT SHIELD FROM THE WRATH OF GOD (2:25-29)

1. Circumcision is indeed of value if you obey the law (2:25).
The habitual practice of the law is involved in this expression. Now we have seen and know God's law gives no security, but rather leaves the sinner utterly without excuse. But is not circumcision an effective shield against God's wrath? "*Peritomay*" – circumcision – was the seal of the covenant, and as such an assurance given to the circumcised man that he belonged to the

race that was the heir of God's promises. So the Jews bear the mark of circumcision as evidence that they belong to God. Paul says that circumcision is indeed an advantage. But the covenant, of which circumcision is the sign, is a covenant of law. Therefore they of the circumcision must fulfill the law. If the actual inheriting of the promises has any moral conditions attached to it (as Paul proceeds to show that it has), then the advantage of circumcision lapses unless these are fulfilled. Should God, as the Jew seems to feel, out of partiality for him because he is circumcised in the flesh, close His eyes to the Jew's disobedience? Must not the just God rather, when a Gentile keeps the law, regard him as circumcised, while the Jew transgresses the law as if he were not circumcised. "Obey" – as a habit, opposed to habitual transgression.

2. The Gentile who fulfills the law will condemn the Jew who breaks the law (2:26-27). "Uncircumcised" – men who have neither the written law, nor the token. "Keeps" – practical piety, obey as a habit. The will to do God's revealed will is in view; not sinless obedience. (Acts 10:35 – Cornelius is a case exactly in point. He was not sinless. He needed saving. But he "feared God and worked righteousness", and the Divine welcome was his.

The Jew has an outward pledge that he belongs to the people of God, to encourage him when he is tempted to indolence or despair. Yet he is a law-transgressor. The Jew's outward standard does not vary with his moral condition, like the law written in the pagan's heart. The Gentile who has done what circumcision bound the Jew to do will be treated as if in the Jew's position.

3. What constitutes a Jew in the true sense of the term is something inward and spiritual (2:25-29). Mere circumcision does not make an Israelite indeed. Real circumcision is a matter of the inner life. Heart circumcision is an idea already familiar to the Old Testament (Deut.10:16). Heart circumcision alone deserves the name of circumcision. This is achieved by the Spirit of God, and not by written law. Paul is reminding the Jew in his trust in circumcision that the Scriptures themselves declare that the vital thing is not external membership in God's peculiar people. For God accords a "Jew" only to one whose heart is circumcised and purified.

Circumcision was the outward sign of the true cutting off of sin; as baptism is only the visible sign of a needful inward cleansing. Men see the sign, but God knows the heart. So circumcision involves two things: God's promise, and the requirement of the law.

IV THE WHOLE WORLD LIES IN GUILT BEFORE GOD (3:1-20)

1. The Jews are the recipients of a divine revelation (3:1-2). "Oracle" – Divine Word, the prophetic element in the Old Testament, and as a revelation of God has a forward look. It anticipates completion and excites hope. The sum of it was that God had promised to His people "a future and a hope."

God gave Israel a unique place in the history of redemption. The fact that God chose Israel and gave her His promises can never be undone. The fact that God established that relationship still stands. So the Jew's advantage does not rest on what he does, but on what God has done with him. It was to him that God first gave His word of promise. By the "circumcision" Israel became the people of promise, a precious trust.

2. The Oracles of God have had their fulfillment in Christ (3:3-4). Paul speaks of God's promise, which would cease to be true if man's faithlessness could destroy its validity. But it remains true because God fulfills it despite man's faithlessness. But those to whom the Oracles were entrusted have in some cases refused their faith to that fulfillment.

3. God could not judge at all if He were unjust (3:5-8).

Since God does judge, He is not unjust. Men forget the difference between God and themselves when they contemplate such a situation as that God should be unrighteous. God passes judgment on unrighteousness. How can one imagine that God will punish some iniquities and overlook others? For the evil doer does not aim at serving the will of God. Paul raises two questions: If it is actually true that man's sin thus magnifies God's glory, (1) Is it not unjust for God to visit His wrath on man? (2) And ought not man sin the more, that God's glory may be greater? Paul raises both questions and rejects both as not worth discussing. "I speak in a human way." Man may reason like this: "Wrongdoing is really excusable, since by God's overruling, it leads to good consequences. It is therefore unjust for God to punish the offender anyway." This all too human way of looking at evil Paul disavows.

Paul contrasts the truthfulness of God with man's falseness (3:7-8).

Why should I suffer punishment on account of that which contributes to the glory of God? If our sin can contribute to the glory of God, ought we not to sin the more that God's honor may thereby be magnified. With apparent justice the Jews felt they could draw that conclusion. The Jews were convinced that Paul could not evade judgment on the ground that his sin has been a foil to God's righteousness. So Paul turns this conviction of theirs against themselves. If he cannot evade judgment, no more can they on their part – he and they must be judged together is his point. The slander was of Jewish origin.

4. Jew as well as Gentile is under the power of sin (3:9-18).

Both alike are under sin. The idea is that of being under the power of sin, as well as simply sinful. Men are both guilty and unable to escape from that condition. The long series of quotations has many points of interest. The assertion of indiscriminate sinfulness corresponds with Scripture testimony. It is as if Paul had said, I can express my opinion in inspired words, and therefore it has God upon its side.

Paul calls attention to their own Scriptures – Psalms 14:1-3, 5:9, 10:7, 36:1; and Isaiah 59:7-8. Jewish Scriptures testify to Jewish sin. Psalmist and prophet alike speak of universal corruption. No attention is paid to the context.

Spiritual misery had come upon the Jews in the path of self-righteousness. Paul points to the destruction and misery which human wickedness inflicts on others. They tread continually in paths of violence. Adam, sinning, turned his back and fled from a Holy God. God had to take the place of the seeker. "Adam, where art thou?" (Genesis 3:9). Verse 18 sums up and explains the universal corruption of mankind.

5. Purpose of the Law is to convict of sin (3:19-20).

"Whatever the law says" – Paul means the words he has just quoted from the Old Testament.

"Law" – here the expositors understand it to be the written revelation as a whole. The words just spoken were addressed to the Jews, and have in them the spiritual environment of their life. And in this case "the law" is used in the wider sense – of the old revelation generally, not specifically to the Ten Commandments. All who have been under the law should admit concerning themselves that they have not a word to say, and are under God's judgment. Let man be silent as to his own righteousness and his claim of advantage; let him rather confess that he is a sinner.

The Jew asks what good is the law, if it does not help man to attain to righteousness? To attain to the righteousness of God is a task which no human being has strength to accomplish. Paul

answers that the "law" is good that sin may be unmasked and man brought to a consciousness of it. The issue is not sins in a moralistic sense, but sin as a power, a dynamic force. It is by the law that man can see that sin is the ruling power of his life. There is no law given with power to give life, and therefore there are no works of law by which men can be justified. The law brings men down to the point where they feel to the full how sinful they are, but it is not for it to lift them up.

CONCLUSION:

By faithful fulfillment of the law one shows that he is true to the covenant. The law itself does not protect against the wrath of God. Nor does circumcision shield from the wrath of God. It is of value only if you obey the law. The same principle underlies the judgment for Jew and Gentile.

By:

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**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD
REVEALED THROUGH CHRIST**

Romans 3:21-31

By:
T. Paul Deaton
March 21, 1952

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED THROUGH CHRIST

Romans 3:21-31

INTRODUCTION:

Up to this point Paul has dealt only with the old aeon. His entire presentation has been concerned with the wrath of God manifest in like measure against the Gentiles' unrighteousness and the Jews' righteousness by the law. The wrath of God is the inclusive judgment on the old age. All this led to the conclusion that all the world stands guilty before God.

In the passage before us Paul has now come to the decisive matter of the transition from the one age to the other. We now come to the unfolding of that word which Paul in chapter 1:17 declares to be the heart of the Gospel. "But now," Paul says, something utterly new has entered human history. "The righteousness of God has been manifested." So Paul's task now is to reveal God's coming out in righteousness at the Cross unto us. With that the new age has appeared. "All this is from God." The new situation is in no way man's achievement. All that man was able to effect stands under God's wrath. The change is brought about by God's intervention, by the work which He effected through Christ.

The strongly emphasized "now" has temporal as well as logical significance. "Now", in Paul's own day, the miracle had happened. Formerly God had revealed His wrath from heaven. But now God has revealed His righteousness in Christ. It is an action of God which constitutes this new revelation.

PROPOSITION:

Like God's wrath in the old aeon, so the righteousness of God in the new is in highest degree an active and effective entry of God, by which the whole existence and circumstance of man are affected.

DISCUSSION:

I THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS NOT BY THE LAW (3:21).

1. The Righteousness of God

It has come from God and is revealed through Jesus Christ. The Divinely-granted, and righteous, acceptance of believers. "*Dikaioisune*" – Righteousness – indicates that the vital thing is not merely a new relationship among men. Righteousness is primarily God's rather than man's. It is a way of acceptance which God has provided.

We may be inclined to think of righteousness as a quality of man. When we think of righteousness we habitually think of something which stands in opposition to sin. Since sin is certainly real in man's life and expresses his inner condition, we readily think of righteousness also as a quality of man. So if sin may be described as a perverted state of mind, an inner condition which makes man displeasing to God, it is easy to view righteousness simply as a state of mind, an inner quality which makes one acceptable to God. But Paul's view of sin is quite different. Sin is more than an inner state. Sin is an objective power of corruption which has man in its clutch. And righteousness is not an inner quality of man's. But righteousness is an objective power by which God has given man a new status through Christ.

2. Manifested apart from the Law

The righteousness of God is revealed. It is a reality in our midst, which God has manifested on earth. "Now . . . has been manifested apart from law." In these days of Christ and the Gospel. It

is clearly shown without the Law – Mosaic Law. God has established an entirely new relationship with man. And this relationship is characterized not by God's wrath, but by His righteousness. "Manifested" – in the Person and work of Christ. The reception of the Gospel means the coming of a new world. "*Choris nomou*" – apart from the law – legal obedience contributes nothing to evangelic righteousness. "*nomou*" – law – the religion embodied in statutes.

3. The Law and the Prophets bear witness to it.
Here the whole expression is equal to the Old Testament. And the meaning is that the Gospel is not alien to the religion of Israel, but really finds attestation there. "*Pephanerotai*" – once for all the righteousness of God has been revealed in the Gospel.

The truth is that the righteousness of God cannot be reached by the Law. The righteousness of God and righteousness by Law are opposite to each other and exclude each other. The law always speaks about that which is required of man. "But now", in the new aeon, it is no longer a matter of law, but of Christ and of faith in Him. Wherever the righteousness of God is found, it has come, and has been revealed, through Christ; and in that the law claims no share. "Law and the prophets" – Paul refers to the Holy Scriptures of the old covenant.

II THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH (3:22-24).

1. Every thing depends on faith (3:22)
It is Paul's profound concern to make this truth clear. "Through faith" – resting upon faith. It is Paul's concern to make clear that every thing depends on faith. The righteousness of God comes to all on the terms of faith. All alike need it, and can receive it only so. So the means by which the righteousness is received is faith in Christ. And it is given to all who have such faith. "Faith" is man's trustful acceptance of God's gift, rising to absolute self-surrender, culminating in personal union with Christ, working within as a spirit of new life.

Here Paul presents the positive side. What "the law and the prophets" had foreshadowed of old has now become a present reality through Christ. The righteousness of God is revealed that it may be shared with us and become ours. It becomes ours through faith.. By the grace of God man is included in God's own righteousness. Righteousness has its source in God and comes to us through Christ. It is referred to as something which comes upon man from above, possesses him and directs him. By faith in Christ we are recipients of the righteousness which comes down to us from God.

2. We are called to be partakers of God's glory (3:23).
"*Hamarton*" – have sinned – without exception all are sinners before God. The present tense implies that but for sin men might be in enjoyment of the glory of God. No one has anything to offer which could elicit the love of God. Man's own righteousness, though it be of great importance within human relations, does not serve at all to motivate God's work of salvation. The only motive is in God Himself, in His gracious will. Because all have sinned they have come short of that which God purposed for them.

"*Usterountai*" – fall short – expresses the consequences. To their loss they come short of the glory of God. It is to feel one's need. Wherever God is, there is His glory. We are called to be partakers of that glory. God has not created us to live under the thralldom of alien powers, but to live in His kingdom and share in His glory. But sin has kept that intention from realization.

"*Doxaes*" – glory – the Divine perfection which is manifested in Christ, and which shines upon man and transfigures him into the likeness of Christ – partially now, and completely hereafter. Wherever God is, there is His glory. And we are called to be partakers of that glory.

3. Justification (3:24a).

"They are justified" – In the deepest sense of the word it is sinners who are justified. Justification is a liberation. The man who receives the righteousness of God is set free by it from some condition of bondage or peril. The sinner is set free from a condition in which he was exposed to the wrath of God revealed from heaven against sin. Justification is the act of God. He has placed us in a new situation. Justification is God's reckoning to one who believes the whole work of the redemption of Christ. It means to account one righteous. It is a change of our relation to God.

4. Declared righteous as a free gift (3:24b).

"They are justified by His grace as a gift." "*Dorean*" – a gift – signifies that we contribute nothing, that the whole charge is freely supplied by God. Paul proves the universal absence of merit in men by showing that they are justified freely by God's grace. Justification costs the sinner nothing. Christ is all in it. The whole cargo is freely supplied by God – "*Tae autou chariti*" – by His grace. The grace of God is infinite love operating by an infinite means – the sacrifice of Christ. It is the going forth of God's mighty love.

5. Christ redeems us from sin and its penalties (3:24c).

"*Apolutroseos*" – redemption – deliverance from bondage by payment of a ransom. The ransom was Christ's life, not considered as paid to any one, but as the price which it cost Him to procure our deliverance and to restore us to God. The "redemption" recognizes man's slavery to the powers of destruction. And its purpose is to show how that condition has been completely changed in Christ. "Which is in Christ Jesus" always refers to the glorified Christ. It is something which has entered into human history at a precise point. But it also stretches on throughout that history. Here that which happened once in the death and resurrection of Christ is also looked upon as that which always happens when by faith men are incorporated into Christ and become members of His body. It is a redemption, a liberation, which has taken place in Christ. This redemption and the righteousness of God belong indissolubly together.

III HOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH WAS REVEALED (3:25-26).

1. An expiation by His blood (3:25a).

"Whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood." "*Ilastaerion*" – to expiate, to make an atonement for, to be invested with propitiatory power. Christ became a propitiation by shedding His blood. It is that which makes it possible for God to be favorable to man. There is no propitiatory power of blood known to Scripture unless the blood be that of sacrifice. It is Christ's blood that covers sin. And it is in His blood that Christ is endued with propitiatory power.

"Expiation" – *Ilastaerion* – God has given Christ to us as the means of atonement. God has put Christ forward before all the world as our means of atonement. Paul has in mind a precise point in history – Christ's death. The Crucified and Risen Christ is our Redeemer and Reconciler – in one breath Paul speaks of both. Ever since the death and resurrection of Christ the righteousness of God is a reality present and manifested in our world.

2. He is received by faith (3:25b).

"Received by faith" – every one who is properly and sufficiently characterized as a believer in Jesus. God accepts as righteous those who by faith unite themselves to Christ upon the Cross, and identify themselves with Him in His death. For in doing so they submit in Him to the Divine

sentence upon sin, and at bottom become right with God. Men are saved freely, and it is all God's work. Yet that work does not avail for any one who does not by faith accept it. What God has given to the world in Christ, infinitely greatly and absolutely free as it is, is literally nothing unless it is taken. Faith must have its place as the correlative of grace.

3. God can hold no terms with sin (3:25c).
"This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins." An essential element in a propitiation is that it should vindicate the Divine righteousness. It should proclaim with unmistakable clearness that with sin God can hold no terms. God has put forward Christ as an expiation thereby to let His righteousness openly appear. And through Christ He now lets us share it "within the realm of faith".
4. The effect of Christ's sacrifice (3:26).
"It was to prove – is righteous – and justifies." "To prove" – for otherwise it might have been doubted. The righteousness of God is the whole character of God so far as it must be conceived as inconsistent with any indifference about sin. Christ was an expiation in virtue of His death. And death to Paul was the doom of sin. By Christ's atoning death it was made utterly clear that God actually judges sin, and yet can forgive without sacrificing His righteousness.

IV THE WHOLE WORLD LIES IN GUILT BEFORE GOD (3:27-31).

1. It excludes boasting (3:27).
"*Exekleisthae*" – excluded, once and for all. How is the "law", the divinely appointed spiritual order which excludes boasting, to be characterized? The function and purpose of the law is "that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God". Yet Paul says that it is not by the law that boasting is excluded. Because the law cannot remove the roots of boasting. The law can actually bring our boasting low, but it cannot remove it in principle. In situation after situation the law can make man see that he has not measured up to God's demand.

Faith excludes boasting once for all. Its character is given when we call it a constitution of "faith". Here is a righteousness which is already actual. In that fact there is no occasion for boasting, for it is not a righteousness effected by man. It has come to him from above, from God.
2. No claim can be made on the ground of human merit (3:28).
"A man is justified by faith apart from works of law." It is his purely as something which he has received and for which he must thank another. In justification it is a matter of faith and of faith alone. Every thing is excluded except faith. Through Christ righteousness has come into our world. Faith must not itself be interpreted as a work of law. In principle it is a renunciation of all such confidence as legal obedience inspires.
3. Jew and Gentile are on the same footing (3:29-30).
There is one God for all. And He accepts all men on the same condition – faith. There can be no step-children in the family of God. There is only one God, and therefore He must be God of all, of Gentiles and Jews alike. Verse 30 explains and confirms what precedes. Justification is to be conceived in precisely the same way for Jews and Gentiles. Paul has found that which binds Jews and Gentiles together. As there is only one God, so there is only one way of salvation for all mankind. There is no distinction here between Jew and Gentile.
4. The law becomes fulfilled at last (3:31).
Paul here sets the "Law" upon a secure footing. Paul speaks as from the consciousness of a

Jewish objector. For the first time the law gets its rights. To prove this was one of the main tasks lying upon the Apostle of the New Covenant. The Gospel establishes the law, because it is the most sublime manifestation of the holiness and strictness of God. Sin never appears more fearful than at Golgotha, where, on account of it, "God spared not His own Son".

CONCLUSION:

Humanity stood under the bondage of sin. And God's purpose in giving the law was to bring men to a knowledge of sin. The righteousness of faith upholds the law and makes it effective. Faith in Christ does not overthrow the law. It rather confirms it and helps it to achieve its intended result. The righteousness of God is an active and effective entry of God, by which the whole existence and circumstance of man are affected.

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THE INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE

Romans 4

I THE GOSPEL IS THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL (4:1-7).

1. Abraham's righteousness was the righteousness of faith (4:1).

"What shall we say about Abraham – humanly speaking?" There is an inner unity between the old covenant and the new. The Law and the Righteousness of Faith support each other. In this chapter, the Law and the Prophets support the righteousness of faith. In Abraham the Jews saw their relation to God embodied in an ideal figure. "We are Abraham's children" – from Abraham they derived their spiritual advantage.

Paul takes Abraham away from the representatives of righteousness by the Law and sets him forth as the type of those who through faith are righteous. *Doulos* – under obligation to Christ which could never be discharged. In the N.T. it is always God who calls. Paul was an Apostle by vocation. The glad tidings of the Gospel comes from God. God is its Source and Author.

2. The Gospel is the fulfillment of hopes which God inspired (4:2).

It is not a subversion of the true religion as it has hitherto been known to the people of GOD. But GOD promised it before through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Abraham had nothing to boast about before God. Paul declares Abraham's righteousness was not by the Law, not by works, but by faith. It is only Abraham's faith that is noted in Gen.15:6. We witness an action of Divine Grace.

3. The nature of the righteousness of faith (4:3).

"Abraham trusted in God and it was credited to his account as right living and right standing with God." The subject of the Gospel of God is His SON. Abraham's righteousness was a righteousness of faith. It is the sinner who is justified by God. This is the inescapable truth with which Paul's Gospel stands.

Righteousness is by God's action, and not by man's. Man is not righteous, nor can he make himself so. EACH is justified by God's Grace as a free gift. He becomes a chosen object of the Divine Love. He is God's instrument for accomplishing the salvation of God's people. The essence of justification is the forgiveness of sins. When God forgives sin, He in so doing establishes righteousness. Before God there is no righteousness except that of faith.

4. Sonship is the dignity which rested on Christ's relationship to God (4:44).

"Now to a laborer, his wages are not counted as a favor or a gift, but as something owed to him." The resurrection declared Jesus to be what He truly was. "This day have I begotten Thee" – refers to the coronation of the King. In virtue of His Resurrection, Christ is established in that dignity which is His, and which answers to His nature. "SONSHIP" answered to the spirit of holiness which was the inmost and deepest reality in the Person and life of Jesus. "Our LORD" – is the most compendious expression of the Christian consciousness.

To the man that works for wages the wages are due as a debt. But no one ever got righteousness by work. One must rely on God just as he is. God declares his faith is counted as righteousness.

5. Through Christ Paul received GRACE and APOSTLESHIP (4:5).
Grace is common to all Christians. But "Apostleship" rests on a specialized GRACE and implies competence as well as vocation. It is a man's "charisma" which constitutes his call to any particular service in the Church. The object of the Apostleship received through Christ is the obedience of faith. The final purpose of Paul's vocation is that Christ's Name may be above every Name.
6. "CALLING" includes obedience as well as hearing (4:6).
All belong to God who have heard and obeyed the Gospel. It is effectual calling. They have accepted the Divine Invitation. Any man whose iniquities are forgiven. To impute righteousness has in it an actual bestowment of grace, an actual acceptance with God.
7. Forgiveness involves the heart of the Forgiver (4:7)
Forgiveness is more than remitting of penalty. Forgiveness involves the heart of the giver. God's forgiveness is the going forth of God's infinite tenderness toward the object of His mercy.

"Covered"- an O.T. word. Those sacrifices could never take away sins, but only "cover" from sight. In those sacrifices there is a remembrance made (not a removal) of sins year after year. The sins were still there till Christ took them away on the Cross. Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
8. The inflexible purpose of God (4:8)
"Blessed is the person – of whose sin the Lord will take no account nor reckon it against him."
[AMP] God will not bring up again the SIN of the blessed man [Psalm 32]. Nathan said to David (2 Samuel 12:13): "Jehovah hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." High offenses were David's indeed – adultery, hypocrisy, murder – but God did not reckon them against David. True, the King was chastened. God allowed four sons of David to be smitten. But God did not reckon the guilt against David.

II NOT THROUGH CIRCUMCISION WAS ABRAHAM RIGHTEOUS (4:9-12).

1. Abraham is the spiritual ancestor of all believers (4:9).
The justification of Abraham appears in a new light. He is the natural ancestor of the Jews, but the spiritual ancestor of all believers. "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." The faith which was imputed to him for righteousness constitutes him such.

For the Jews Abraham was the great dividing point in history. The foundation was laid for something new. This was handed on to his successors by circumcision. Through Circumcision Israel was marked with God's own seal. Circumcision is the external mark of belonging to God's peculiar people. So Abraham marked the parting of the ways in God's history for mankind. The "Circumcised" belonged to God's chosen people. The "uncircumcised" – God allowed them to go their own way.

God. is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. Paul seeks to show that the felicitation of the justified is not limited by circumcision. His FAITH was reckoned with.
2. Under what conditions was his faith reckoned unto him? (4:10).
How did it happen that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness? Was his faith reckoned to him when he was circumcised or when he was uncircumcised? History enables PAUL to answer: Not when he was circumcised, but when he was still uncircumcised. Abraham's

justification is narrated in Genesis 15, and his circumcision not until Genesis 17 – some fourteen years later. Hence it was not his circumcision on which Abraham depended for acceptance with God.

It was not through circumcision that Abraham was made righteous. Faith and the righteousness of faith came first. "Circumcision" came 14 years later as a seal of the righteousness which he had received by faith.

3. "Circumcision" was given as a sign of the SEAL of faith and righteousness (4:11)
"Circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith." "Circumcision" is a pledge or a symbol that one is in covenant with God. "He received the mark of circumcision as a token or an evidence or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised."
4. Things were so ordered that Abraham might be father of all that believe (4:12).
Thus the righteousness in question might be imputed unto them. It was God's intention that Abraham be the representative and typical believer, in whom all believers without distinction should recognize their spiritual. Father.

The Divine method of justification was to be inaugurated and illustrated in him. It should hold good for all who were to be justified. The Whole process took place antecedent to his circumcision. In no circumstance has circumcision any essential relation to this great blessing. (But Paul found the Jews trusting in circumcision rather than in God and in Christ.)

III NOT THROUGH THE LAW WAS ABRAHAM MADE RIGHTEOUS (4:13-15)

1. The promise is held out by God of HIS own motion (4:13).
"The promise to Abraham that he should inherit the world did not come through Law but through the righteousness of faith." It was not through the Law that Abraham became righteous. What is affirmed is that Abraham believed GOD. The Divine promise is identical with salvation in the widest sense.

There was to be participation in the sovereignty of the Messiah. Abraham and his seed would be heirs of the world in such a sense. There was to be the spread of Abraham's faith, and the multiplication of his spiritual children. In proportion as it spreads he inherits the world. It would be as one justified by faith.

2. The promise given to Abraham (4:14).
"Not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith." Abraham should be heir of the world. It refers to the dominion of Christ over the world. Recall the words of the Sermon on Mount by Jesus.

Paul was concerned about who would be included in the promise and on what condition it would be fulfilled. Paul sees the reference of faith. The promise is given by grace and can therefore be accepted only by faith.

3. Men come under the wrath of GOD, and know that they do (4:15).
Under a legal dispensation SIN is stimulated, and brought into clear consciousness. This is the result of the Law. But Law cannot be the means through which God administers His grace and makes man the heir of all things. To attain this inheritance man must live under a regime of faith. "The Law results in wrath."

Law gives no life and has no power over the flesh. It is "faith and grace" which give promise. When the Law is made known SIN is intensified to transgression. So it depends on faith in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all believers. Abraham has become the father of all who follow in the footsteps of his faith. The "promise" continues to all who share the faith of Abraham.

IV ABRAHAM IS THE TYPE OF HIM "WHO THROUGH FAITH IS RIGHTEOUS" (4:16-22)

1. Abraham is the pattern (4:16).

The promise is the outcome of faith and depends on faith. Paul develops his idea of the representative character of Abraham's justification. GRACE on God's part is the correlative of FAITH on man's part. The Divine purpose instituted the spiritual order of grace and faith. "The seed which is of the Law" – should mean Jews. The seed "which is of faith of Abraham" – should include Gentiles. The "faith of Abraham" is to be reproduced in all the justified – whether Jew or Gentile. It is for all who share the faith of Abraham.

2. Abraham is the spiritual ancestor of all believers (4:17).

This is the testimony of Christians – not Jews. Paul's faith is in the GOD who is thus conceived. God had given Abraham a promise, and it was that which he believed. Abraham had the Divine promise; and he could not be made to doubt God. It was only on God's promise that Abraham based his faith.

The faith of Abraham is reproduced in all the justified, whether Gentile or Jew. It is Christians who can truly say "We have Abraham to our father." It is his true, historical, Divine standing, that he is father of all believers.

"Who gives life to the dead and speaks of the non-existent things that as if they existed." To Paul "God is the God who makes the dead alive and calls things that are not as though they were." Reference is to the unborn multitudes of Abraham's spiritual children. God speaks of them as if they had a being.

3. It was on God's promise that Abraham based his faith (4:18).

"Abraham hoped on in faith that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been promised." It was only on God's promise that he based it. "With hope" is the real mark of faith. Faith does not mean to close one's eyes to the facts. Abraham saw the situation as it really was.

God could do what nature could not. "Look unto the promise of God" alone, and not to circumstances. The promises of blessings were lodged in Abraham, and all conditions of blessings were fulfilled by Christ. Satan hates active faith in a believer's heart, and opposes it with all his power.

4. Abraham grew strong in his faith (4:19).

"He considered not his body." His great age was the primary and fundamental fact in the situation. The contrast with becoming weak, as he considered his body, the actual conduct of Abraham. When our own possibilities fail, faith increases. Faith does not rest on ourselves and our own adequacy, but on GOD and His promise.

5. Abraham had God's promise to hold to (4:20).

That is the way faith acts. Abraham became inwardly strengthened through faith. It was only a

question of God's ability to carry out what He had promised. Abraham set God's promise before his mind, and did not waver – even if he were an old man.

6. God and faith belong together (4:21).
There is no faith without an awareness of God. Faith depends on God. "God was able and mighty to keep His word." In his whole conduct, Abraham glorified God, and demonstrated his own assurance of God's power. Faith can never be just a function of the soul or an inner condition in man. It is impossible to separate the action of faith and the object of faith. There is no action of faith if we lose sight of the OBJECT of faith – God and His promise.
7. Abraham gave God the honor that was due Him (4:22).
Honor and glory are qualities of God. Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. The Gospel illustrates and confirms the religious order under which Abraham lived. The spiritual attitude of a man, who casts himself upon the Word of God, is the eternally right attitude of all souls to God. Count on God to bring to pass His Word.

V CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT (4:23-25).

1. Scripture conveys a present eternal truth, (4:23).
It conveys the idea of a Divine order under which things proceed. The object of the Christian Faith is God – the God who raised Jesus our Lord. By His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus became our Lord. By faith in HIM we are included among the children of the Resurrection. God has dealt with us through Christ.
2. Standing acceptable to God is accredited to believers (4:24).
We were justified by Christ's death. Justification is not only an act of God, but a spiritual experience. It is dependent on faith, and is realized in us one by one when we receive the Gospel.
3. We believe in a living Savior (4:25).
It is faith in Christ which justifies. Jesus both died and was raised for our justification. The work is ONE and its end is ONE. Faith in Risen Lord justifies. God's character is revealed in Redemption. Faith is abandonment of self to GOD.

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION

Romans 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

The first section of the Epistle (Rom. 1:18-3:20) has proved man's need of the Righteousness of God. The second section (3:21-30) has shown how the righteousness comes, and how it is appropriated. The third section (3:31-4:25) has shown, by the example of Abraham, and the testimony of David, that it does not upset, but establishes the spiritual order revealed in the Old Testament.

The Apostle Paul now, like David, enlarges on the felicity of the justified, and especially on their assurance of God's love and of future blessedness. We may describe the contents of verses 1-11 in the words which he himself applies to the 32nd Psalm.

I CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION HAVE NOT BEEN IN VAIN (5:1-6)

1. There are those who have actually been justified in consequence (5:1).
"Having, therefore, been justified." The justified have peace with God. His wrath no longer threatens them. They are accepted in Christ. It is not a change in their feelings which is indicated, but a change in God's relation to them.
2. Christ has introduced us to our standing as Christians (5:2).
"Through whom also". To the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ corresponds this other fact – through Christ we have our access into God's grace. Christ has introduced us to our standing.

The grace is substantially one with justification. It is the new spiritual atmosphere in which the believer lives as reconciled to God. "On the basis of hope in the glory of God." On the basis of partaking in the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

3. The tribulation being the ground of the glorying (5:3).
"Because we are in tribulation." Not only do we glory on that footing, but we also glory in tribulations.
4. Endurance produces approvedness (5:4).
"Has as its fruit, or effect, endurance." More of the sense of bravery and effort than the English, "patience". It is not so passive. Its result is a spiritual state which has shown itself proof under trial. The English equivalent would be "character".

The experience of what God can do results in hope. What God does for the justified results in "hope" amid the tribulations of this life. The experience animates into new vigor the "hope" with which the life of faith begins.

5. Paul points to that on which the "HOPE" is ultimately dependent (5:5).
"The hope which has not been extinguished, but confirmed under trial, does not put to shame."
All these Christian experiences and hopes rest upon an assurance of the love of God.

It is obvious that it is not our love to God, BUT it is the love of GOD to us. It is the evidence of

God's love to us which the Apostle proceeds to set forth. God's love has been poured out in, and still floods, our hearts.

The Holy Spirit was given to Christians in virtue of their faith. What the SPIRIT given does is to flood the heart with God's love, and with the assurance of it.

6. The assurance we have of the love of God is conditioned on Christ's death (5:6). Christ died for the ungodly. The objective fact is to the Apostle the first of certainties. The persons concerned were no longer weak, but strong in new relation with God.

"In due time." At the time determined by the providence of God and the history of man as the proper time, Christ died. In the interest of the ungodly.

II THE LIVING LORD, IN VIRTUE OF HIS LIFE, WILL SAVE US TO THE UTTERMOST (5:7-11)

1. Christ's death for the ungodly assures us of God's love (5:7). For the utmost that human love will do is far less. "*hyper dikaiou*" – "For a righteous man". Jowett: "The notion of dying for an abstract idea is entirely unlike the age in which the New Testament was written. Opposition of Christ's dying for sinful persons requires that persons should be in question here also. But the exceptional case is definitely conceived as happening."

"It is difficult to die for a just man; it has been found possible (one may venture to affirm) to die for a good man." The difference is like that between "just" and "good". The "GOOD" is a more generous and inspiring type of character.

2. God's love is presented in its true and unmistakable character (5:8). How greatly is this utmost love of man surpassed by the love of God. God makes good. His own love toward us. HIS – as opposed to any thing that we can point to as love among men – spontaneous and characteristic love. They are no longer such sinners, but are justified.
3. How can God demonstrate His love to the sinner (5:9)? How can God bestow on man a divine righteousness? The supreme difficulty to be overcome in the relations of man and God is the initial one. Paul shows how the Gospel (3:21-30) meets this difficulty.

We obtain the righteousness required by believing in Jesus. God has set Jesus forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. If such grace was shown us then, when we were in sin, much more, justified as we have now been by His blood, shall we be saved from wrath through Him – the wrath to come.

This deliverance from wrath (1:18) does not exhaust Paul's conception of the future. It is an important aspect of it, and implies the rest.

4. We were in a real sense objects of the Divine hostility (5:10). This verse rather repeats the argument of verse 9. The state of sin was that in which we were. As sinners, we lay under the condemnation of God, and His wrath hung over us.

This was the situation which had to be faced. Was there LOVE in God equal to it? Yes! When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. "WE" are the OBJECTS –

not the SUBJECTS – of the reconciliation. The SUBJECT is GOD.

5. Paul is demonstrating the love of God (5:11).
He can only do it by pointing to what God has done, not to what we have done. We on our part are hostile to God before the reconciliation, and that we afterwards lay aside our enmity.

The Apostle's real thought is this: "If, when we lay under the divine condemnation, the work of our reconciliation on to God was achieved by HIM through the death of His SON, much more shall the LOVE which wrought so incredibly for us in our extremity carry out our salvation to the end." It exhibits the love of God at its height in the Cross. The Living Lord in virtue of His life, will save us to the uttermost.

The Christian glories in God. It is in God, "clothed in the Gospel," that he obtains that knowledge of God's character which enables him to exult. The change is in God's attitude toward us. We receive it, by believing in Christ, whom God has set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. We take it as God's GIFT.

A TREATMENT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 5:12-21

I RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A DIVINE GIFT TO SINNERS IN CHRIST JESUS (5:12-14)

1. The Righteousness is complete (5:12a)

The general truth Paul teaches is that there is a real unity of the human race, on the one hand in sin and death, on the other in righteousness and life. In the former aspect the race is summed up in Adam. In the latter it is summed up in Christ.

2. The unity in Christ is spiritual, being dependent upon faith (5:12b).

By the entrance of SIN is meant that SIN as a power entered into that sphere in which man lives. SIN, by Divine appointment, brought death in its train – as an objective power. Death extended over all men. The sin of which death is the consequence was also universally prevalent (3:23).

The world consists of persons capable of sinning and of being saved.

3. The actual sin which individuals had committed (5:13).

There is an inherited guilt, but not an inherited sin. The Fall of Adam has brought death upon the whole race, not however sinfulness in the sense of a necessity to commit sin. The reign of death, apart from imputable individual sin, implies a corresponding objective reign of SIN, apart from individual acts.

4. Sin is the result of each individual's decision (5:14).

It is, as far as experience goes, universal. Yet, in itself even after the FALL not absolutely necessary. It is Paul's appeal to experience in crossing with a transcendent view of the unity of the race in Adam, which gives rise to all the difficulties of interpretation. There must be something which involves the individual in Adam's fate.

II PARALLEL OF ADAM AND CHRIST (5:15-17).

1. A Divine Righteousness (5:15).

This is the gift which is freely provided for sinners in the Gospel. A Divine Righteousness and life. "ALL"- presents a great number. The idea underlying the inference is that God delights in mercy.

If under God's administration one man's offense could have such far-reaching consequences, much more reasonably may we feel sure of the universal influence of ONE MAN'S righteous achievement. This idea is the keynote of the whole chapter.

God's grace is shown in the gift of His SON. Christ's grace is shown in His undertaking in obedience to the Father the painful work of our salvation. The world is the subject of redemption. The word is prompted by Paul's own experience. The blessedness of the Christian life far outwent the misery of the life under condemnation.

2. A fresh point of contrast (5:16).

The Divine judgment starting from one (person) resulted in condemnation (for all). Whereas the free GIFT, starting from many offenses (which appealed to the mercy of God), has resulted in a sentence of justification (for all). But this sentence of justification only takes effect for each individual on the condition of faith. Redemption is not inspired merely by the fall of the race in Adam, but by its actual and multiplied offenses. This is its glory.

3. Effects of the work Christ (5:17).
We touch experience. The abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness has to be received by faith. A connection is formed with Christ. The future refers to the consummation of redemption in the Messianic Kingdom, in the world to come.

III RIGHTEOUSNESS IS EMBODIED IN THE WORK OF CHRIST (5:13-21).

1. The conclusion of the argument (5:18).
The result in both cases is mediated. In the first by man's actual sin. In the second, by men's faith in Christ. That which Christ achieved in His death – a righteous act – conceived as one thing commanding the approval of God. The work of Christ was a gift in which the righteousness of God is embodied. When God justifies the sinner, he enters into and inherits life.
2. Sinners are so constituted through their own sin (5:19).
The whole life and work of Jesus was the carrying out of the Father's will. Christ's death was the one great act of obedience on which the justification depended. This justification is conditioned in the case of each by faith. It takes place in one life after another. It is when each person believes in Christ that he is constituted righteous.
3. The comparison between Adam and Christ is closed (5:20).
In the middle, between the TWO, stood the LAW. It furthers the end contemplated in the work of Christ. Sin entered into the world. LAW entered into the situation thus created as an accessory thing. "The law slipped in."

As the offense multiplied, the need of redemption, and the sense of that need, were intensified. *Hamartia* – the sum total of evil, made up of repeated acts of disobedience to the law. The LAW had its seat with Israel. But everywhere as the need of redemption becomes more pressing GRACE rises in higher power to meet it.

Grace has not yet attained to its full sovereignty. It comes to this sovereignty as it imparts to men the gift of God's righteousness. Its GOAL is Eternal Life. God's righteousness ends in eternal life.

CONCLUSION:

Paul has concluded his exposition on the Righteousness of God. It is revealed in the Gospel. Paul is addressing the moral consciousness of all men. These who have received the reconciliation, who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness, are the very persons in whom the righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN BAPTISM, DIES TO SIN

Romans 6

INTRODUCTION:

When Paul speaks of the New Religion as establishing the Law – it is naturally the Mosaic Law of which he thinks. It was the one definite embodiment of the concept. The Justification, to the moral consciousness, of the Gospel in which a Divine Righteousness is freely held out in Jesus Christ to the sinner's faith, fills the next three chapters.

DISCUSSION:

I WHEN DID THE ALL-IMPORTANT DEATH TAKE PLACE (6:1-4)?

1. Inference of relations of sin and grace (6:1).
"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The question was one sure to be asked. Paul recognizes it as a natural question, and asks it himself. He answers it with an indignant negative. "God forbid."
2. 2- The reality is qualitative (6:2).
"We, being as we are persons who died to sin." To have died to sin is to be utterly and forever out of any relation to it. After that it is impossible to live in it.
3. The whole argument turns on the question of death to sin (6:3).
The answer is that the death is involved in Baptism. The only alternative to accepting this argument is to confess ignorance of the meaning of the rite in which they had been received into the Church.

We all who were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death. We are baptized Christward, with Christ in view as the object of our faith. We were baptized with Christ's death in view as the object of faith. Our baptism symbolizes an actual union to, or incorporation in, Christ.

The baptism in which we are united to Christ and to His death is one in which we confess our faith, looking to Christ and His death. There is a necessary connection between justification by faith and the new life. Justifying faith, looking to Christ and His death, really unites us to Christ who died and rose again – as the symbolism of baptism shows to every Christian.

4. This symbolism interpreted (6:4).
We were buried with Christ – in the act of immersion – through that baptism into His death. Burial being regarded as the natural sequence of death, and a kind of seal set to its reality. Death in the whole context is perfectly definite. In nothing was the splendor of God's power revealed so much as in the Resurrection of Jesus. In life of a new quality. The construction makes the new quality of the life prominent.

II UNION WITH CHRIST AT ONE POINT IS UNION WITH CHRIST ALTOGETHER (6:5-7).

1. We become vitally one (6:5).

We become vitally one with the likeness of His death. If the baptism, which is a similitude of Christ's death, has had a reality answering to its obvious import, so that we have really died in it as Christ died, then we shall have a corresponding experienced resurrection.

Baptism, inasmuch as one emerges from the water after being immersed, is a picture of resurrection as well as of death.

2. What we were before we became Christians was crucified with Christ (6:6). Paul says simply because Christ died on the Cross, and we are baptized into that death. The object of this crucifixion of the "old man" was that "the body of sin might be brought to naught. Apart from the crucifixion of the old self this body in which we live can be characterized as a "body of sin". The body of which SIN has taken possession is to be reduced to impotence.
3. 3. Death annuls all obligations (6:7). Death breaks all ties. Death cancels all old scores. "Death clears men of all claims, especially it clears us who have died with Christ – of the claim of SIN to rule over us still." Dying with Christ is the idea of the whole passage.

III THERE IS NO CONSCIOUS SEPARATION OF ETHICAL AND TRANSCENDENT LIFE WITH CHRIST (6:8-11).

1. To Paul it is one life (6:8-9). The new life with Christ will be the same which Christ Himself lives, a life inaccessible to death. The post-resurrection life of Jesus was not His old life over again. In that old life death had dominion over Him. Now that dominion of death has expired.
2. "The death that Christ died, He died to sin once for all" (6:10). The language of the Apostle seems to imply that there was something in the mind of Christ in dying for us that was the moral equivalent to that death to sin which takes place in us when we believe in Him. Something in its very nature is fitted to produce the change in us.

Christ laid down His life rather than violate the will of God. In this sense Paul points to an experience which can be reproduced in others under Christ's influence. Christ by dying paid to sin that tribute to which in virtue of a Divine sentence it could lay claim. Those therefore who share His death are like Himself absolved from all claims of sin for the future. The very idea of death is that of a summary, decisive, never-to-be-repeated end.

3. The essence of our faith is a union with Christ (6:11). Application is made of all that precedes. The death with Christ, the life with Christ, are all real – but are yet to be realized. The truth of being a Christian is contained in them. Yet the calling of the Christian is to live up to them. We may forget what we should be. We may forget what we are.

We are dead to sin in Christ's death. We are alive to God in Christ's Resurrection. Let us regard ourselves as such in Christ Jesus.

IV THE INNER LIFE IS IN UNION WITH CHRIST (6:12-16).

1. Practical enforcement (6:12-13).
The outer life must not be inconsistent with the inner life. The frail body should be protected against the tyranny of sin. Do not put your members at the service of sin, but put them once for all in the service for God.
2. They can obey these exhortations (6:14).
They are not under law, but under grace. Sin will be their tyrant. Grace is not restraint but inspiration. Grace liberates from sin. It is not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary that makes saints.
3. 3. Our life is inspired by God's mercy (6:15).
Are we to sin because our life is nor ruled by statutes? Our life must be inspired by the sense of what we owe to that free pardoning mercy of God. Are we to sin because God justifies the ungodly at the Cross?
4. No man can serve two masters (6:16).
The servant is the exclusive property of ONE master. He belongs to just that ONE master, with obedience in view. Nothing else than obedience to his master alone is contemplated. The masters here are: *Hamartias* – sin, whose service ends in death; and *Hupakoais* – whose service ends in righteousness, in the sense of character which God approves.

The Christian is a slave who has changed masters. The Christian in his entirety is a bondsman to righteousness. Formerly he stood under the dominion of SIN; Now he is set free from sin, but bound in the service of righteousness. He lives under another master, righteousness.

V MAN'S NATURE REQUIRES HIM TO SERVE SOME MASTER (6:17-23).

1. The Christians were obedient with respect to something (6:17).
In whatever form the Gospel won the obedience of men, it was inconsistent with their continuance in sin. Paul thanked God that his readers had made their choice for obedience. Paul here is grateful that their servitude to sin is past, and that they have received the Gospel. The Gospel is regarded chiefly in its ethical requirements. It became a moral authority in the lives of men when they received it.

"You have become obedient with all your heart, to the standard of teaching in which you were instructed and to which you were committed." The decision lies in man's own hands. But when he has made his choice, inescapable consequences follow therefrom. Paul says: "You have made your choice to serve God and righteousness; Now let your manner of life show that you are in earnest." The Christian teaching is the pattern in keeping with which the whole life of the Christian is to be shaped.
2. Conform to the Divine Will in thought, purpose, and action (6:18).
There is no absolute independence for man. Our nature requires us to serve some master. The Christian in his entirety is a bond-slave to righteousness. He is a slave who has changed masters. He is bound in the service of righteousness.
3. Right being and doing leads to sanctification (6:19).
What is "the weakness of the flesh"? Paul is writing to morally weak persons whose nature and

past life really made them liable to temptations. Sanctification is an act or process. They live "in the spirit"; but they still experience the drag of the flesh. He who is in the pay of one commander must fight against the other. We must see this necessity of service to God or service to sin for our own lives.

4. Paul appeals to their fruits (6:20-21).
God has in sovereign grace rescued us. In the evil days they were given to iniquity. Those were fruitless days of which they were now ashamed. In every state in which a man lives there is a bondage and a liberty. The "FRUITS" determines which life is the true one.

5. A consciousness of eternal life (6:22).
"You have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life." There is the daily delightful fruit, which comes through sanctification. There is the consciousness of the full realization of that blessed eternal life – which they already possessed but whose full enjoyment would be at the end of this life.

The service of sin leads to death. The service of righteousness leads to eternal life. "Now you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God. The return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life."

6. The end in God's service is of grace (6:23).
"The wages which sin pays is death." This is normal and natural. The soldier's pay who enlists in SIN'S service is DEATH. The end in God's service is not of debt, but of grace. "The bountiful free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ."

Man finds in death an end to every hope, an end to every project, an end to all his thoughts and plans. Man sinks down into nothing. SIN has come in. With sin, conscience. With sin, Satan's power. With sin, God's Judgment. It is the wages of sin.

But Christ has also come in. Death and judgment becomes our salvation. Christ grants life to the lost soul and a welcome into heaven. The Christian belongs to Christ. God does not pay wages to His servants – HE bestows on each a free gift, not because of our merit or labor. Through Christ we share in eternal life.

THE LAW STIMULATES SIN

Romans 7

INTRODUCTION:

By death the Christian is freed from the Law. The Law is good in itself and in the Divine intention. Nevertheless, owing to the corruption of man's nature – instead of helping to make man good, it perpetually stimulates sin.

Before Christ came the whole of mankind was sunk in bondage to the powers of destruction. Because of his sin and alienation from God man had fallen under the wrath of God. SIN ruled over him. SIN is the weapon which death uses to bring humanity under its dominion. But SIN would not have had such power were it not for the Law. Only after the Law had come could sin abound as actual sin.

DISCUSSION:

I LIBERATION FROM THE LAW (7:1-6)

1. Paul is speaking to people who know what the Law is (7:1).
"I am speaking to men who are acquainted with the law." Neither Roman nor Mosaic Law is specifically referred to. The argument rests on the nature of "LAW" in general. Paul would think first of the Mosaic Law, but it is not exclusively referred to. The Law is the document that expresses God's will, under which the Christian must live. It is a helping and saving power.
2. The Christian's relation to the Law (7:2).
"Through Christ we are free from the Law." Can one die to the Law? It is this which Paul affirms with much emphasis. He who knows the law knows that the law rules over man as long as he lives. But death sets a limit to the relevance of the law. Only through death can one be freed from the law. Its ability to rule as man's lord is terminated by death.

Death liberates the married person who yet remains alive and can enter into new relations. The Christian is freed by his own death. And the wife is freed by her husband's death. She is once for all discharged. Only death breaks a legal bond.
3. Dissolution of a relationship by death makes possible a new relationship (7:3).
Only death breaks the legal claim. "If her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress." Paul is not saying that we are free from HIM who died, but that we are free from the Law. Death ends the sway of the Law.
4. Christ's death is a sin-expiating death (7:4).
Christ's death draws men to Him. It spiritually reproduces in them a reflex of His death, with which all their old relations and obligations terminate. Paul is speaking of the experience of Christians one by one. We can only belong to a living person. God is the Person interested in this result.

"Now you may belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit to God." Christ has died, and the result is that they are free from the law. Man dies to the law, and is now free to enter a new relationship. The Christian is to bring forth fruit to God.

5. It is through the Law that the passions become actualized (7:5).
We would never know them for what they are, if it were not for the Law. Death is personified. This tyrant of the human race is the only one who profits by the fruits of the sinful life. The issue is the role which the law plays. It aroused sinful passions and bore fruit for death. The Law demands that man be the servant of God and obey His will.
6. The role of the LAW in the Christian life (7:6).
"Now we are discharged from the Law and have terminated all intercourse with it." Considering what we are as Christians we are discharged from the Law, by our death to that in which we were held. We have been delivered, by dying, from the Law in which we were held. The possession of the Spirit makes this possible.

"Now we serve under the Spirit in newness of life." There is no Law that can give life. Not even in the Christian is the Law able to bring forth fruit for God. Through Christ we have died to all the old hostile powers. The Law is not a saving power for the Christian. It is only those who see themselves to have died with Christ and to be now joined to a Risen Christ in glory, that fully bring forth fruit to God.

II THE ACTUAL WORKING OF THE LAW (7:7-13).

1. Paul's object is to conciliate for his own mind the idea of liberation from the Law with the recognition of the Old Testament revelation (7:7).
"Is the Law identical with sin? If it had not been for the Law, I should not have recognized sin or have known its' meaning." Paul is here exercised not at all about pardon, but about deliverance. The question is concerning indwelling SIN, as a power. Not committed sins, as a danger. It is the experience of the unregenerate, but seen through regenerate eyes, and interpreted in a regenerate mind. It is the Apostle Paul's spiritual history, but universalized.

We cannot date the things of the Spirit as simply as if they were mere historical incidents. It is a history in which one stage is not extinguished by the next, but which is present as a whole to his consciousness, each all the time determining and determined by all the rest. "I should not have known sin but by the Law." It is the legal character of the Mosaic Law which is in view. It is this which enables us to understand the experience in question.

The desire for what is forbidden is the first conscious form of sin. "I should both have been ignorant of lust, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust, and ignorant of other forms of sin unless the Law had prohibited them." The Law prescribes a holy walk, but furnishes no power whatever for it. It is the Law which teaches us the differences between right and wrong. Sin would not be the power that it actually is in the life of man, if the Law had not helped to that end.

2. The Law gives SIN its opportunity (7:8).
"Sin, finding opportunity in the commandment to express itself got hold on me." SIN is a power dwelling in man. How it "receives occasion" is not stated. It must be by coming face to face with something that appeals – but when it has received it it avails itself of the Commandment. Apart from the Law we have no experience either of the character of sin or of its vitality. SIN takes the Law into its service.
3. There is no happy time when man had no conscience (7:9).
"Once I was alive but quite apart from and unconscious of the Law." In these words the most intensely real experience is vividly produced(re). When the commandment came, SIN "came to

life again". Its dormant energies woke, and "I died". It is all doom and despair, too simply felt to be a subject for analysis.

The Commandment comes with its requirements. Then SIN revives. The Law arouses SIN to activity, and in a sense provokes it. The LAW takes its place among the powers that destroy.

4. The commandment defeats its own intention (7:10).
It has life in view, but it ends in death. Life and death are indivisible wholes. Sin and Death have the destruction of man as their original purpose. The "LAW'S" primary aim is to make man responsive to the will of God. Paul discovered the spirituality of the Law, and it commanded him to be and to do.
5. The result is due to indwelling sin (7:11).
Inherited from Adam. When it has found a base of operations it employs the commandments to deceive and to kill. "Sin beguiled and entrapped and cheated me." The Law became the means by which SIN attacked Paul. All hopes in himself vanquished.
6. The LAW is holy (7:12).
The Commandment is the Law in operation. It belongs to God and has a character corresponding. "Each commandment is holy and just and good." Its requirements are those which answer to the relations in which: man stands to God and to his fellow creatures. In its nature and aim it is beneficent. Man's weal is its natural end.

The LAW was given so that the whole world may be held accountable to God. Paul looked up to the Law. It was an expression of God's holy Will. "If there were no sin, the Law would not be a power of destruction."

7. It was not the good Law, but SIN, which became death (7:13).
In this there was a Divine intention – that SIN might appear sin, might come out in its true colors. SIN turns God's intended blessing into a curse. Personified SIN turns out to be sinful through its perversion of the Commandments. The more fully and widely the Law resolved itself in new and fresh commands to Paul's soul, the more intense and desperate became indwelling Sin's horrid opposition to it.

God's very purpose for the LAW was that, through it, "Sin might become sinful beyond measure". It was through the LAW that SIN got such a power. From that destroying power Christ has saved us. Only liberation from both the Law and from SIN mean SALVATION.

III THE IMPOTENCE OF THE LAW TO CALL FORTH THE GOOD (7:14-25).

1. Paul exhibits the power of SIN in the flesh (7:14).
It is this which makes the LAW weak, and defeats its good intention. He describes a discord which exists within himself. The Law comes from God who is Spirit, and it shares His nature. Its affinities are Divine, not human.

Paul is thinking of human nature, rather than of human character. *Sarkinos* – "Flesh" is used to describe man as a slave of sin. It distinguishes man from God who is SPIRIT. There is the sense of man's weakness, and pity for it.

Paul is contrasting the Law of God and human nature, on the basis of his own experience. The

experience is essentially that of his pre-Christian days. It is the unregenerate man's experience, surviving at least in memory into regenerate days, and read with regenerate eyes. It is indwelling sin, and not his real self, that is working out this evil.

2. Man under the Law as FAITH sees him (7:15).
"For I do not understand my own actions." This is the experience of a regenerate man before he knows about indwelling sin. God let Paul have this experience. Now Paul writes about it that we might read and know all the facts of our salvation. "My act is that of a slave who is but the instrument of another's will." The heart is included in man's ruin.
3. The moral nobility of the Law (7:16).
His will agrees with the Law, that it is good. The Law has a beneficial purpose. The real step is not to oppose the Law in the heart. The thief on the Cross took that step. The sin dwelling in Paul was working it out.
4. SIN which has its abode in man is responsible for the line of conduct described (7:17).
Paul said: "It is sin that dwelleth in me." To be saved from sin, a man must at the same time own it and disown it. It is this practical paradox which is reflected in this verse. It is safe for Paul to explain his failings by the watchword: "Not I, but indwelling sin". Indwelling SIN is a hateful power. An unwelcome, hateful Presence seeks to dwell within the Christian.
5. It is "SIN" that has to be taken account of in this connection (7:18).
"I know that nothing good dwells within me." In my flesh there dwells no good. The want of will is the very thing lamented. An inclination to the good. Is at hand, within. the limit of his resources. – but not the actual effecting of the good. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit as our only Spiritual Power, just as on Christ. God must work in us. Remember the Christian is not isolated from the SPIRIT.
6. Moral contrast between good inclination and bad action (7:19).
"I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing." This verse must not be made to describe Paul's "manner of life in Christ Jesus." This verse expresses our utter powerlessness in ourselves against the evil of the flesh. The Christian still lives in the flesh.

Humanity is carnal. It must not be forgotten that the Law is God's. The Law is given by God, and is an expression of God's holy will. As God's own word, the law is living and powerful. But the Law confronts a humanity that is sold under SIN. It is because of man's sin that the Law is a destroying power.

7. The Christian has not ceased to be a child of Adam (7:20).
"It is not myself that acts, but the sin (principle) which dwells in me (fixed and operating in my soul). The indwelling SIN is really responsible for the bad actions. The indwelling sin works out the hated life of defeat. The Christian is a spiritual man, but he does not cease to be of flesh and blood. He is subject to the condition of sin. Paul is speaking of the Christian. He has the will to do good, but sin is present with him.

IV SUMMARY (7:21-25).

1. In the realistic situation in which the Christian lives, SIN occurs (7:21-23).
With his heart the Christian serves the Law of God. But he continues in an inclusive in which

with his flesh he serves the Law. Even if we have found God's way of deliverance, evil is present. Evil will be present until the Lord comes.

Paul delights – thus revealing himself as regenerate throughout this struggle. An unregenerate man is not conscious of a moral power which is not himself. An outward compulsion seems to be put on by sin. The Law of God legislates for man, and in the inner man he delights in it. "The inner man" is that side of every man's nature which is akin to God, and is the point of attachment for the regenerating Spirit. It is called inward because it is not seen.

Paul sees in his nature two authorities saying to him: Do this, and the higher succumbing to the lower. As the lower prevails, it leads him captive to the law of SIN which is in his members. The end therefore is that man, as a creature of flesh, living under LAW, does what SIN enjoins. It is the Law of SIN to which he gives obedience.

2. A wail of anguish and a cry for help (7:24).

These are the words which Paul knows are wrung from the heart of the man who realizes that he himself is in the state just described. It is reproduced by Paul as the cry of the man whom SIN and LAW have brought to despair.

"This death" – is the death which man is acutely conscious of in the condition described. It is intensely realized through the experience of captivity to SIN. "The body of this death" – the body which is the instrument involved in its doom. Salvation must include deliverance from such character and destiny.

3. The longed-for-deliverance has actually been achieved (7:25).

The regenerate man's ideal rises with sudden joy into a declaration of his actual emancipation as a Christian. Christ is regarded as the Mediator through whom the thanksgiving ascends to God. Paul was delivered through Christ. The sinner is forgiven by faith in what Christ did do at the Cross. The Christian lives his life in Christ. To be in Christ is full and complete righteousness.

THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Romans 8

INTRODUCTION:

By the Spirit the power of SIN is broken, and the believer is enabled to believe in GOD. Without God's work on the Cross there would be no Salvation. Without the presence and constant operation of the Holy Spirit there would be no application of that Salvation to us – no revelation of it to us. Romans is a BOOK of Salvation.

This EIGHTH chapter takes up the work of the Holy Spirit which is directly concerned with our salvation. This part of our salvation is exercised by the Third PERSON of the Godhead. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the message that concerns salvation. Christ Jesus and Him glorified is that which concerns our perfecting as believers.

DISCUSSION:

I THE SPIRIT AS THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LIFE (8:1-11)

1. Description of Christians (8:1).

The Spirit as opposed to the flesh is described as the principle of righteousness and life. This verse distinguishes the Christian from the Pre-Christian period of life. The description of Christians as "those who are in Christ Jesus" goes back to the words of Jesus Himself in John 15.

This eighth chapter of Romans comes after the work of Christ – after His atoning blood has put the believer's sins away. After he has died with Christ and to sin. It is on account of the Spirit's acting as a law of life, delivering the believer from the contrary law of sin and death – that there is no condemnation. The important thing here now is the Spirit's work within us. The new creature has no power within himself apart from the blessed Spirit.

2. All ground for condemnation has been removed (8:2).

It is subjection to the law of sin and death which involves condemnation. Emancipation from it leaves no place for condemnation. The SPIRIT which brings to the believer the life which is in Christ Jesus brings with it also the Divine Law for the believer's life. SIN and DEATH are conceived objectively as powers which impose their own law on unredeemed men.

Those in Christ Jesus share His risen life. No condemnation – means no condemnatory judgment. "The law of the Spirit of life has freed me from the law of sin." "Law" – a given principle acting uniformly. The believer is given the Holy Spirit – becoming the Almighty Agent within the believer, securing him wholly.

3. The "Inability of the Law" was removed by God (8:3).

It was achieved or accomplished by God. "God has done what the Law could not do." What the Law could not do, God did by sending His Son. With the coming of so great a PERSON, uniquely related to God, a new saving power entered the world. Sending His SON thus was in some way related to the end to be secured.

Paul wishes to indicate not that Christ was not really man, or that His flesh was not really what in us is sinful flesh, but that what for ordinary men is their natural condition is for this PERSON

only an assumed condition. God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" in which Christ appeared among men. This identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption. The teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is "ONE with us" – short of SIN. Christ was sent in our nature as an offering for sin.

God sent His SON to expiate SIN by His sacrificial death. This is the center and foundation of Paul's Gospel. The power of SIN cannot be broken except by expiating it. "Christ by His sinless life in our nature condemned SIN in that nature." Christ condemned our sinful lives and left us inexcusable and without hope.

We get on to a wrong track if we fail to see that God, not Christ, is the subject. God's condemnation of SIN is expressed in sending His SON in our nature, and in such a connection with SIN that HE died for it. HE took its condemnation upon Himself. Christ's death exhibits God's condemnation of sin in the flesh. *En te sarki* – in the flesh: That in which SIN had reigned – was also that in which God's condemnation of sin was executed.

In the death of His own SON, who had come in our nature to make atonement for SIN, God had pronounced the doom of SIN. God brought its claims and its authority over man to an end.

4. All this was done that a righteous life might be fulfilled in us (8:4).
"So that the just and righteous requirement of the Law might be fully met in us." It is not our doing, though done in us. "Who live and move not in ways of the flesh." This is the condition under which the Divine purpose is fulfilled. There is no physical necessity in it. "The flesh" meant is our corrupt human nature. The Spirit is the Divine SPIRIT which is given to those who are in Christ Jesus. It is in them "both Law and impulse".

We are to walk by that indwelling SPIRIT which God has given to us. On the CROSS Christ put away our guilt before God by His blood. Sin was condemned as having any connection with human flesh. There our "old man" was crucified with Christ. The evils of our natures are judged at the Cross. God now deals with man through His own SON.

5. We pursue what the mind is set upon (8:5).
"Those who are according to the flesh and controlled by its unholy desires." Those whose nature is determined simply by the flesh. Their mind, their moral interest, their thought and study is upon the flesh.

"Those controlled by the desires of the Spirit, seek those things which gratify the Holy Spirit." Those whose nature is determined by the Spirit. His mind and heart are directed to the things of God and His will.

6. Contrast between death and life (8:6).
The Christian still lives in the flesh, with all the sin and weakness that that involves. At the same time he lives "in the Spirit", with all that involves of righteousness and life. He stands under death and under life. Through the Spirit the Christian is free from death. Yet that freedom is his only as something assured for him in the future. Death is the doom awaiting a certain life. "Mind of the Spirit" – are the possessions and experiences of the believer.
7. The mind of the flesh is hostile to GOD (8:7-8).
Mind of the flesh terminates so fatally because of its hostility to God. Alienation from GOD is necessarily fatal. It is the flesh which does not submit itself to God. As the seat of indwelling sin it is in permanent revolt. Those who are in it cannot please God.

8. The Christian can please God (8:9).
"You are living the life of the Spirit." Only the indwelling of Christ's Spirit proves a real relation to him. The SPIRIT becomes the element in which the believer lives. At Ephesus there were some who were disciples, but who did not have the Spirit (Acts 19:1). Paul instantly discerned it. Jesus was not yet glorified in them. There must be the sense of full acceptance in Christ and sealing by the Holy Spirit.
9. Consequences of this indwelling of Christ in the Christian (8:10).
"If Christ lives in you – the Spirit is alive." The Spirit is alive because of righteousness. The human spirit is life, God-begotten, God-sustained life. This life is due to righteousness. No one can begin to be good till he is justified freely by God's grace in Christ Jesus – till he has begun to live the good life in the Spirit.
10. The future is sure (8:11).
A share in the Christian Resurrection is conditioned by the possession of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the same as the Spirit of God. This Spirit is the alter EGO of Christ.

The indwelling Spirit is that of Him who raised Jesus from the dead. It is the guarantee that our mortal bodies also (as well as our spirits) shall share in immortality. The SPIRIT is the Agent in this resurrection. The indwelling of the Spirit is the ground on which God raises our mortal bodies to undying life.

The Christian becomes a spiritual man because the Spirit of God dwells in him. The body is to be transformed into keeping with the spiritual character of the new. In, and by participation in, His righteousness, life has been given to the Christian.

II THE SPIRIT IS REGARDED AS THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (8:12-17)

1. The Christian is actually to live (8:12-13).
The hopes of the Christian lay them under obligations. They owe nothing to the flesh. If they live after the flesh they are destined to die. If they live by God's Spirit they will put to death the doings of the body, and they shall live – the life against which death is powerless. In the absence of the Spirit the body in all it does is only the tool of the flesh.

"We are debtors, but not to the flesh – we are not obligated to live a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates of the flesh." Identified with Christ, our old man was crucified with HIM. We share His newness of life as being in Christ Risen. The Spirit of life is caused to indwell us, setting us free from the law of sin and death.
2. Kinship in nature to God (8:14-15).
"As many as are led by God's Spirit are God's sons." Life is congruous to such a dignity. "SONS"- refers to the time of baptism as when they received the Spirit. The Spirit proper to those who were being translated from the servile to the filial relation to God. They are made sons by an act of GRACE from the only Begotten Son of God. The act of grace is accomplished in the giving of a spirit which creates in us a new nature. We have not only the status, but also the heart of sons.

"The Spirit which you have now received." The general control by the Spirit of those born of the Spirit. The "SPIRIT" is the sphere and the mode of their being, and is their seal unto the day of

redemption.

3. Our own spirit tells us that we are God's children (8:16).
"The Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirit." The voice with which the Spirit speaks is prompted and inspired by the Divine Spirit itself. God is addressing Himself to the consciousness of His children – not at all to human intellect. God is showing that the child of God, having had communicated to him God's own nature, is conscious of the glorious fact of filial relationship to God. The Spirit indwelling is our enlightenment, our encouragement, our energy.
4. It is from God the inheritance comes (8:17).
We share in it with Christ. Those who share Christ's sufferings now will share His glory hereafter. In order to share His glory hereafter it is necessary to begin by sharing His sufferings here. "We are to share His sufferings if we are to share His glory,"

Heir-ship is from relationship. We are really begotten of God by His Word through His Spirit. Only "BELIEVERS" are god's heirs. The Young Ruler asked: "Lord, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He was a legalist.

It is not the suffering, but the glory that is the goal. The way to participation in God's glory is through suffering. It is of primary importance that we are participants with Christ in His sufferings. The GLORY waits in the life to come.

III A THREEFOLD TESTIMONY TO THE FUTURE TRANSFIGURATION WHICH AWAITS SUFFERING BELIEVERS (8:18-27)

1. The first testimony – the sighing of Creation (8:18-22).
 - A. The glory comes from without, to transfigure them (8:18).
The insignificance of the present suffering compared with future glory was a fixed idea with the Apostle. The unusual order emphasizes the futurity – toward and upon us. The glory is revealed at the glorious Second Coming of Christ. It is Christ's glory of which the BELIEVERS are made partakers. The seed of the glory that is to be lies in the suffering that is here. It is a suffering with Christ.
 - B. Paul conceives of all creation as involved in the fortunes of humanity (8:19).
Creation sighs for it. Creation is not alien to our life and its hopes. It is the natural ally of our souls. The music of humanity rises triumphantly above all the pain of conflict. Paul waited with uplifted head. With the revelation of the sons of God humanity would attain its end, and nature too.

All Creation is waiting in expectation for that "unveiling of the sons of God". "Revealing" – removing of a covering, as when some wonderful statue has been completed and a veil thrown over it. People assemble for the "unveiling" of this work of art. The Saints are wrapped up in the common brown paper of flesh, looking outwardly like other folks. Bet the whole Creation is waiting for their unveiling at Christ's coming. For they are connected with Christ, one with Christ, and are to be glorified with Him at His coming.
 - C. Creation was subjected to vanity (8:20).
"Vanity" – the idea is that of looking for what one does not find – hence of futility,

frustration, disappointment. *Mataiotati* – the vanity of vanities. The complaint of the utter result-lessness of life. Sin brought this doom on Creation. Sin made a pessimistic view of the universe inevitable. The precise time denoted is that of the FALL, when God pronounced the ground cursed for man's sake.

Creation came under this doom. It was on account of God – that God's Righteousness might be shown in the punishment of SIN – that the sentence fell upon MAN. The sentence on man, however, was not hopeless, and Creation shared in his hope as well as in his doom. When the curse is completely removed from man, as it will be when the sons of God are revealed, it will pass from Creation also. And for this Creation sighs. God had a vast plan, reaching on into Eternity.

D. Contents of the Hope (8:21).

"Nature itself will be set free from its bondage." Death claims every thing – Creation as well as man. It is a system of slavery – in subjection to "vanity", with no high eternal worth of its own. From such a condition Creation is to be emancipated. It is to share in the liberty which belongs to the glory of the children of God.

When man's redemption is complete, he will find himself in a new world matching with his new condition. This is Paul's faith. The sighing of Creation attests it. We have now the liberty of grace. The "liberty of the glory of the children of God" awaits Christ's Second Coming.

E. How do Christian know this (8:22)?

We may say that the Christian consciousness of SIN and Redemption is in contact with the ultimate realities of the universe. It is not that we are in pain, and Creation with us. It is that the whole frame of Creation, all its parts together, unite in sighing and in pain. There is the suggestion of the travail out of which the new world is to be born.

2. Second Testimony to the glorious future – yearning hope of Christians themselves (8:23-25).

A. It is related to the possession of the first fruits of the Spirit (8:23).

The Spirit which Christians have received is itself the first fruits. And because we have it, it is the foretaste of Heaven. The heaven begun in the Christian intensifies his yearning for the complete redemption. The Spirit has made BLEIVERS Sons of God. But only when their mortal bodies have been quickened, and the corruptible has put on incorruption, will they possess all that sonship involves. The Spirit dwelling in them guarantees its own fulfillment. The Spiritual Victory is known. The "redemption body" is longed for – which the Lord's Coming will bring.

B. Salvation is essentially related to the future (8:24-25).

Paul speaks of Christians as waiting for adoption, while they are in the enjoyment of sonship. It is because salvation is essentially related to the future. "We wait for it: for we are saved in hope." Our salvation was qualified from the beginning by a reference to a good yet to be. "For this object of hope – eternal life and glory – were we delivered from eternal destruction." Hope is an essential characteristic of Salvation.

We do not see all the Gospel held out to us. But it is the object of our Christian hope nevertheless. It is as true and as sure as the love of God which in Christ Jesus reconciled us to Himself and gave us the spirit of adoption, and therefore we wait for it in patience. *Pistis* – faith, *Agape* – love, *Hupomone* – patience. Paul writes as if he had discovered by

experience that in this life "hope" has mainly to be shown in the form of "Patience". It is the patient waiting for the coming liberty of the glory of the children of God.

3. Third testimony to the glorious future – the Intercession of the Spirit (8:26-27).
This Intercession of Spirit helps us in our prayers, and lends words to our longing. This action of the Spirit points consistently to one conclusion – the weakness which the Spirit helps is that due to our ignorance. We do know what we are to pray for – the perfecting of salvation. But we do not know what we are to pray for according as the need is at the moment. We know the end, which is common to all prayers. But we do not know what is necessary at each crisis of need in order to enable us to attain the end.

There is the intercession of the Spirit with groanings which baffle words. He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit in this unutterable intercession. It is in the heart, therefore, that it takes place. The Holy Spirit has entered into the life of man. His intercession for us – so intimately does He share all the evils of our condition – is a kind of agony.

It is part of God's great plan in our salvation that this effectual praying should have its place. We cannot grasp the meaning. We believe that such consciousness of the Spirit's praying within us is included in this verse.

The Heart Searcher understands this intercession (8:27). He intercedes in agreement with God's will, on behalf of those who are God's. The intercession of the Spirit and the intercession of Christ are made on behalf of those who are in Christ – Saints, Church. In the plan of salvation, God the Father is the SOURCE, Christ is the CHANNEL, and the Holy Spirit is the AGENT.

IV CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT – THE APOSTLE GLORIES IN THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S ETERNAL AND UNCHANGEABLE LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST (8:28-39).

1. God will not abandon us at the last (8:28).
God is ever with us. "God being a partner in their labor, all things work together and are fitting into a plan for good to those who love God and are called according to His design and purpose." God cooperates for good in all things. It is in pursuance of a purpose of God with reference to the eternal purpose of redemption that they are called. To Paul "CALLING" – never means just an invitation, but an "effectual calling."

Real faith in the God who gave His Son will be working through love. The Divine Providence is limitless. Life is ordered – every minute detail – by God. Those who love God are defined as those that are "called" – given a Divine elective calling according to His Purpose. "Purpose" – an intelligent decision which the will is bent to accomplish. It is carried on by Divine GRACE.

2. God in all things cooperates for good with the called (8:29-30).
God's gracious purpose, beginning with foreknowledge and fore-ordination perfects all that concerns them on to the final glory. "Foreknew" – Persons who would answer His love with love. Salvation Begins with God and begins in Eternity. *Proegno* – Those of Whom God took knowledge from eternity. The Son of God is the LORD who appeared to Paul by Damascus. To be conformed to His image is to share His glory as well as His holiness. The Pauline Gospel is hopelessly distorted when this is forgotten.

The END in all this is the exaltation of Christ. *Prototokon* – Firstborn – He is regarded as having attained the fulness of His Sonship through the Resurrection. The eternal fore-ordination appears

in time as "calling", effectual calling. Salvation is contemplated as the work of God alone. God in Jesus Christ forgave our sins, and accepted us as righteous in His sight. Ungodly as we had been, He put us right with Himself. In that, every thing else is included. The whole argument of chapters 6 through 8 has been that justification and the new life of holiness in the Spirit are inseparable experiences. With GOD there is neither before nor after. Paul is talking of God's dealings with Christians here on earth.

3. Victory through the love of God in Christ (8:31-32).

"Who can be our foe if God is on our side?" The idea underlying all that precedes is that of the suffering to be endured by those who would share Christ's glory. Paul asserts the presence through all the Christian's life of an eternal victorious purpose of love.

"These things" – the whole process of our salvation by Christ, the great deliverance by the help of the Holy Spirit. God spared not His Son for me. The Christian's faith in Providence is an inference from redemption. The same God who did not spare His own Son will freely give us all things.

It vivifies the impression of God's love through the sense of the sacrifice it made. None were worthy of such a sacrifice. The argument of selfishness is that He who has done so much need do no more. But the argument of love is that He who has done so much is certain to do more.

Soon auto ta panta – "with Him all things" – The whole of what furthers the Christian's life, the whole of what contributes to the perfecting of his salvation; all this will be freely given to him by God. When God gives us His Son He gives us the world. There is nothing which does not work together for our good; all things are ours. God has opened to us His Heart.

4. Christians are persons who owe their standing as such to the act of God's grace (8:33-34). The affirmation is followed by a question. "Who shall bring any charge against God's Elect – when it is God who puts us in right relation with Himself?" Who shall bring a charge against persons who are God's chosen? All Christians are conscious that this is the truth about their position – they owe their standing to the act of God's grace.

Christians belong to God, because God has taken them for His own. The one thing Paul is concerned with is the security given by the eternal love of God that the work of salvation will be carried through, in spite of all impediments. There is nothing here (8:28-34) about the privilege of serving God and carrying out His will. Christians should have a faith and an assurance proportioned to the love of God. Paul was sure nothing could ever separate him from God's love in Christ.

"It is God that justifieth." Christ has done every thing to deliver us from condemnation. Christ died for our sins. The only Person who can condemn is the Judge. Our position depends upon Jesus Christ who died – over whom death no more has dominion. "Who is at the right hand of God" – describes Christ's exaltation as a sharing in the universal sovereignty of God. "Who makes intercession on our behalf" – The Christian consciousness cannot transcend this. This is Paul's final security – last ground of his triumphant assurance. Jesus, with virtue of His atoning death, pleads His people's cause.

5. It is the Divine Love for us which is meant (8:35-36).

The love of God for us is the determining idea. The love of God through Christ can reach and sustain the heart through all trouble. Suffering because of faithfulness is the good fortune of God's people. It is to enter into fellowship with Christ.

6. The Christian is incorporated with Christ (8:37).
Christ's love for the soul is the great persuading power over the human heart. When Paul describes Christ's love for His own it is by pointing to His sacrifice. It is God that is for us. The Christian shares the suffering and death of Christ. If our suffering is for the sake of Christ it can only increase our oneness with Him. These trials do not cut us off from Christ's love, they actually give us more intimate and thrilling experiences of it.
7. The Apostle's personal conviction (8:38-39).
Death is mentioned first as the most tremendous enemy the Apostle could conceive. If Christ's love can hold us in and through death, what is left for us to fear? The blank horror of dying is annihilated by the love of Christ. Neither death nor life is to be explained.

"Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers" – Paul's conception of the invisible spiritual world. Whatever their character, Paul declares their inability to come between us and the love of Christ. No dimensions of space. Nothing that God has made, whatever be its nature, shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ.

The LOVE of Christ is God's love. It was manifested to us in Christ. It is only in Christ that a Divine Love is manifested which can inspire the triumphant assurance of this verse.

CONCLUSION:

God's election and Christ's love is absolutely fixed and certain. God has given us an overwhelming victory over the "invisible powers" through Christ. Christ has become our Lord. In Him life, eternal life, has been given to us.

By:
T. Paul Deaton
October 27, 1969

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH IS NOT AGAINST THE PROMISE OF GOD

Romans 9:1 – 11:36

INTRODUCTION:

With the eighth chapter Paul concludes the positive exposition of his gospel. He starts with the theme of his gospel in 1:1-17. Next he shows the universal sinfulness of man in 1:18 – 3:20, Gentile and Jew. "He who through faith is righteous shall live." He gives the picture of him who through faith is righteous. In the next four chapters he shows what it means to say that he "shall live." In 3:21 – 5:21 Paul explained, illustrated and glorified the Gospel of Justification by faith in Christ. It is set forth by God as a propitiation for sin. In 6:1 – 8:39 Paul has vindicated this Gospel from the charge of moral inefficiency. He shows that justification by faith is inseparably connected with a new life in the Spirit. A life over which SIN has no dominion and in which the just demands of GOD'S LAW are fulfilled. He has even carried this spiritual life on, in hope, to its consummation in glory. No more remains to be said.

With chapter nine a new subject is introduced. There is no formal link of connection with what precedes. The new section deals with a problem which presented great difficulty to the early Church, and especially to men of Jewish birth. The problem haunted the Apostle's own mind. The JEWS as a whole did not receive the Gospel. The Jews were God's chosen people, but if the Christian Gospel brought salvation they had no share in it. The Messiah was to spring from them, but if Jesus was the Messiah this privilege meant not redemption but condemnation, for they rejected JESUS almost with one consent.

The Jews thought the Gospel preached by Paul just could not be of God. If the birth of the Christian Church and the gathering of Gentiles into it represented the carrying out of God's purpose to bless and save men, God must have turned His back upon Himself. God must have broken His promise to Israel, and cast off His chosen people. The Gentile Churches, as Paul asserted, could not be God's true Israel was the Jewish inference.

DISCUSSION:

I IT IS A HISTORICAL PROBLEM PAUL HAS TO DEAL WITH (9:1-5)

1. Paul shows how deeply his heart is pledged to his brethren (9:1).
"I am speaking the truth in Christ." The solemn assertion is meant to clear him of the suspicion that in preaching to the Gentiles he is animated by hostility. *En Christo* – Paul speaks in fellowship with Christ. Falsehood is impossible. Conscience attests what he says.

En Pneumati agio – The Spirit of God, in which all the functions of the Christian life are carried on. Assurance is made double and trebly sure. God had committed Himself to bless Israel. Now in Paul, God's message goes out to all nations. He unfolds to us our relative place in God's plans, along with National Israel's place. We are the objects of sovereign Divine mercy.

2. The fact of Paul's sorrow (9:2-3).
Final and fatal separation from Christ is conveyed. Paul cannot find words strong enough to convey his feelings. "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ, for the sake of my brethren." It is a spark from the fire of Christ's substitutionary love. It is more profound than Moses prayer in Exodus 32:32. Moses identified himself with his people, and if they cannot be saved he would perish with them. Paul could find it in his heart, were it possible,

to perish for them.

3. Paul longed for the salvation of his countrymen (9:4-5).

It is the greatness of his people, their unique place of privilege in God's providence. It is the splendor of the inheritance and of the hopes which they forfeit by unbelief. ALL this makes their unbelief at once so painful, and so perplexing. "Israelites" expresses the spiritual prerogative of the nation. It is not the national but the theocratic name. God had made various covenants with the Patriarchs. The greatness of its ancestry ennobled Israel, and made its position in Paul's time harder to understand and to endure. Now the Israelites were forfeiting every thing for which the fathers had been called.

The supreme distinction of Israel has yet to be mentioned. Of Israel the Messiah, according to the flesh. He who, according to the flesh, is of Israel, is at the same time over all, God blessed for ever. *To kata sarka* – According to the flesh. The Person who is over all is the person just mentioned. It is a declaration of His deity. Paul expressed his devout and adoring faith in the sovereign providence of God.

Paul's purpose is to suggest that the tragic apostasy of the Jews is itself part of the dispensations of Him who is God over all. Over Jew and Gentile alike, over past, present and future alike. God brings good out of evil in the course of the ages. Paul seeks to justify the ways of God to men. (In verses 6-29 Paul argues the vindication of God's right in dealing as He has dealt with Israel..)

II THE REJECTION OF THE MASS OF ISRAEL FROM THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM INVOLVES NO BREACH OF THE DIVINE PROMISE (9:6-13)

1. The Promise was given only to a chosen seed, the Israel of God (9:6-7).

"It is not as though God's Word had failed." "In spite of my grief, I do not mean to say any such thing as that the Word of God has come to nothing." It is not what we get from our fathers and mothers that ensures our place in the family of God.

Paul refers to the great promises God had made to Abraham. God from the very first announced that the seed of Abraham to which the promise belonged should come in the line of Isaac - not of Ishmael. In the line of Isaac Abraham would have the posterity which would properly bear His name, and inherit the promises made to him by God. Isaac's descendants are the true Abrahamidae. They that are of FAITH are sons of Abraham. Paul explains the Divine sovereign action. Only to the Spiritual Israel were the promises given. These promises hold secure.

2. Against men's claims Paul sets God's Sovereignty (9:8-9).

The meaning of the action of God is made clear by Paul. It is the children of the Promise who are reckoned a seed of Abraham. The word in virtue of which Isaac, the true son and heir, was born, was a word of promise. Isaac was born from above. Something analogous to this is necessary, whenever a man claims to be a child of God and an heir of God's Kingdom. If we are Christ's, then too we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

God is sovereign in His promises. God is above all human claims. When God gives His promises, He determines in His own freedom to whom the promises are given. An act of election on God's part is involved.

3. God is sovereign in His promise (9:10-11).

"In order to carry our Cod's purpose of selection which depends on HIM who calls." God gives

His promise to whom He will, allowing no one to prescribe rules for it. God reserved the promise for the spiritual Israel. God made the distinction between Isaac and Ishmael, but also in the case of Isaac's children. "The elder shall serve the younger."

This was done by God of His sovereign freedom. Claims as of right made against God are futile. God acts in entire disregard of men's claims of right. God's purpose to save men and make them heirs of His Kingdom – a purpose which involves a choice – is not determined at all by consideration of such claims as the Jews put forward. In carrying out as well as in forming the choice, God acts with perfect freedom.

Paul's purpose is to show that God's promise has not broken down. The distinction among the descendants of the Patriarchs and those who are the Israel of God can be traced to nothing but God's sovereignty. It is not of works, but of Him who effectually calls men. God is a Law to Himself – a law of love and holiness and truth – in all his purposes towards men. No Jewish claim, no legal works can give a man a claim which God is bound to honor.

4. God makes free choice of whom HE will (9:12-13).
Paul speaks out of his own consciousness as a Jew. We must allow God to act as He will. God works all things according to the counsel of His will. God's purpose is eternal. The determining element is the WILL and CALL of God. Faith must hold fast to God's promise.

III GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN MERCY (9:14-21).

1. Paul meets the objection that this sovereign freedom of God is essentially unjust (9:14-15).
It is Paul who speaks. He states the objection as one in itself incredible. *Para to theo* – “with God” – surely we cannot say that there is unrighteousness with God. *May genoito* – away with the thought. God says Himself that shows mercy with that sovereign freedom which Paul has ascribed to HIM. The principle of action which God has announced as His own cannot be unjust. "Is there injustice upon God's part?" "Certainly not!"

In showing mercy God is determined by nothing outside of His mercy itself. Mercy is the emotion attendant on pity, and even its expression in gesture or voice. God, whose name is Love, must come out to man and come in mercy, or all is over. God had chosen Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. That choice depended solely on God's gracious will. That is of the nature of grace and promise.

2. The experience of God's mercy does not depend on man's effort (9:16-17).
It depends on God's merciful act. "God's gift is not a question of human will and human effort, but of God's mercy." Human responsibility is not at all denied here. We are nothing but sinners, unless God come forth to us in sovereign mercy.

God sees the heart. All men come within the scope of God's sovereignty. Pharaoh as well as Moses are quoted to illustrate it. Pharaoh was an open adversary of God, an avowed adversary. Yet a Divine purpose was fulfilled in his life. That purpose and nothing else is the explanation of Pharaoh's being. Ex. 9:16: "For this reason I brought thee on the stage of history." The purpose Pharaoh was designed to serve was certainly not his own. As certainly it was God's. God's power was shown in the penal miracles by which Pharaoh and Egypt were visited.

3. On whom God will He has mercy (9:18).
Paul draws his comprehensive conclusion. On whom God wills He also hardens. Whether God

chooses to show mercy or to harden – depends upon God's will in which of the two modes He actually does act. Man has no claim as of right against God. It was through God in the last resort, that Moses and Pharaoh were what they were – signal instances of the Divine mercy and the Divine wrath. In His infinite wisdom and knowledge God reads with unerring accuracy the operations of the human heart.

4. God does not act in a freedom uncontrolled by moral law (9:19-20).
The liberty and responsibility of man cannot be ignored. The act of Israel, as well as the will of God, lies behind the painful situation Paul is trying to understand. God can give or HE can withhold His mercy. It is God's will which stands concealed behind every thing. "Israel is herself responsible for her rejection of God's purpose." God is central, and God's election is unsearchable.

Man's salvation rests solely on God's free grace. It does not rest on man's works or exertions, but alone on the fact that it has pleased God, in His Divine purpose to place him with Christ. The real issue is what GOD does for man. God's grace is really free grace on the part of God. Predestination is an expression of the faith that puts life and all its mysteries into the hand of God.

5. Recognize the absoluteness of God (9:21).
Note the Potter's power over the clay. It is not the quality of the clay, but the will of the potter, that decides to what use each part of the lump is to be put. God pronounces moral judgments and can praise or blame man. We are not God's judges. God wants to make known the riches of His glory for "the vessels of mercy".

IV GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN WRATH (9:22-29)

1. God is the sole explanation of human destiny (9:22).
Paul exhibits God's action as an exercise of will of such a character that man can have nothing to urge against it. God bears long with the vessels of wrath in order that the display of His wrath and power may be more tremendous at last. Although it is God's will to show His wrath, still He gives ample opportunity to the sinner to repent and escape. God has shown great patience with them.

Apoleian – Perdition; final ruin. By what agency the persona referred to have been fitted for it Paul does not say. What Paul does say is: That fitted for such a doom as they are, God has nevertheless endured them in much long-suffering, so that they at least cannot say, "Why dost thou find fault?". *Kateartismena* – Perfected, made quite fit or ripe. God's hatred of sin is absolute.

2. God's purpose is regarded as twofold (9:23-24).
It is on the one hand to show His wrath and make known His power. It is on the other hand to make known the riches of His glory. God acts in a way which is so far from giving man room to complain that it commands his wonder and adoration.

Skeun Orgais – Vessels of wrath – for these there is much long-suffering. *Skeun Eleous* – Vessels of mercy – for these there is preparation and a calling in which God's free unmerited mercy is conspicuous. *Gnorisae* – He might make known – This is mentioned as a principal purpose of God. The glory is conceived as something shed upon the persons concerned. They are irradiated with the Divine brightness. Its content was fixed for Paul by his vision of Christ as LORD of Glory.

The end of God's ways with the vessels of mercy is to conform them to the image of His Exalted SON. Paul does not shrink from introducing God as subject here. The vessels of mercy, in whom the Divine Glory is to be revealed, are such as God prepared before for that destiny. That Paul is speaking on the basis of experience. *Skeun Eleous* – Vessels of mercy – God's Elect. They are the actual members of the Christian Church. It is an account of real experiences of God's goodness. Those who are called know that the processes which lead up to and prepare for it, are of God. They know that in all these processes, even in the remote initial stages of them, to the significance of which they were blind at the time, glory was in view.

This Preparation is not limited to any one nation. Doth Jews and Gentiles are called. This "calling" shows that no one can claim God's mercy as a right in virtue of his birth in some particular race.

3. This result of God's ways with man (9:25-26).

It agrees with His own declaration in Scripture. (Hosea 2:23) Paul here applies to the calling of the Gentiles words which spoke originally of the restoration of Israel. In Hosea the promise is that the Israelites who had lost their standing as God's people should have it given back to them, in all its dignity. This also Paul reads of the calling of the Gentiles. Gentiles were once no people of God's, but they have their part in the adoption.

"They shall be called sons of the living God." The ordinary explanation is the Gentile lands. This is as good as any. God's infinite grace gives them the heavenly calling. God had made Himself new vessels of mercy.

4. The partial calling of Israel (9:27-28).

"Isaiah calls over Israel." Only a remnant will be left. The ways of God should be the study of the saints. It is a solemn declaration concerning Israel, that Isaiah makes. Only the remnant shall be saved. The LORD executes a final work within all the land. God fulfills His promise indeed, but HE contracts its fulfillment to just some of Israel, not all.

God suddenly puts into execution an eternally-formed purpose. Thus it was at the Flood, and at Sodom, etc. Remnant – those who have come to believe in Christ. Human claims are excluded. It depends only on him whom God calls.

5. There is no breach of faith on the part of God (9:29).

The remnant is not the germ of a new people. God bears long with the Israelites in order that He may have opportunity to manifest the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. For God's call there is no other reason than God's free mercy. God has fulfilled His promise through Jesus Christ. God has intervened in sovereign grace. All would go to perdition unless God in mercy intervened. We gather around HIM who have come to faith in HIM.

THE PROBLEM OF RELATION OF THE JEWS TO THE GOSPEL

Romans 9:30 to 10:21

INTRODUCTION:

Paul discusses the problem raised by the relation of the Jews to the Gospel. He has just shown in (9:6-29) that they have no claim as of right to Salvation. Their whole history, as recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures, exhibited God acting on quite a different principle. Now Paul proceeds to show more definitely that it was owing to their own guilt that they were rejected. They followed, and persisted in following, a path on which salvation WAS NOT to be found. They were inexcusable in doing so, inasmuch as God had made His way of Salvation plain and accessible to all.

DISCUSSION:

I THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH COMES BY FAITH (9:30-33)

1. Gentiles receive the mercy of God (9:30).

It is not that God has been faithless or unjust. The Gentiles attained the Righteousness which comes by faith. Both Gentiles and Jews had stood under the wrath of God. In Christ, the righteousness of God is offered to all without distinction. The Gentiles were accepted, and Israel is rejected. Israel followed after a law of righteousness, but did not attain that law. *Dikaiosunain* – Righteousness – It is the one fundamental conception on which Paul's Gospel rests. The questions at issue between Paul and the Jews were questions as to what it was, and how it was to be attained.

2. The JEWS were pursuing after a LAW that should give them righteousness (9:31).

The Jews were pursuing after righteousness through their self-efforts, and hoped to attain it. They did not, like the Gentiles, as sinners, simply believe the good news of a God of grace. How to be right with GOD was not their main interest.

The nature of salvation is that it is brought and offered to men. Faith is simply the act of appropriating it. The idea is not that Israel was in quest of a Law of Righteousness, in the sense of a rule by the observance of which righteousness would be attained. Every Israelite believed himself to be, and already was, in possession of such a Law.

Israel aimed incessantly in bringing its conduct up to the standard of a Law in which Righteousness was certainly held out, but was never able to achieve its purpose. *Nomon Dikaiosunais* – A Law of Righteousness – The unattained goal of Israel's efforts is of course the Mosaic Law. It is referred to in its characteristic qualities, as Law, and as exhibiting and enjoining righteousness. But LEGAL RELIGION proved a failure. It remained out of their reach. They could not attain the Righteousness.

3. Israel's whole religious attitude and effort was not of FAITH (9:32).

"They did not depend on faith but on the merit of their works." They conceived the case of works. But there is no outlet along this road. Every thing in religion depends on the nature of the start. You must start from an utter abandonment to God, and an entire dependence on God. In this case a righteousness is possible which you recognize as God's own gift and work in you.

Ergon – Works – Israel started in independence of God, and tried to work out without coming

under obligation to God, a righteousness of their own. They did not claim God's approval, and in this case their efforts were baffled. The starting point was unreal. It was an idea of their own, not a truth on which life can be carried out. They tried to be independent of God.

Israel had a false relation to God. The STONE on which they stumbled was Christ, and especially His CROSS. The *Skandalon* – Offense – of the CROSS, at which they stumbled, is not simply the fact that it is a CROSS, whereas they expected a Messianic Throne. The Cross offended them because it summoned them to begin their religious life from the very beginning at the foot of the Crucified, and with the sense upon their hearts of an infinite debt to HIM – which no "works" could ever repay.

4. The STONE of stumbling is unequivocally God Himself (9:33).
"Behold I am laying in Zion a Stone that will make men stumble, a Rock that will make them fall." All who do not give GOD honor are broken against His government as on a stone, or caught in it as in a snare. Paul applies the figure of the STONE to Christ. Some stumble over Him - as the Jews. Others build on Him and find Him a sure Foundation. They put their trust in Him and are not put to shame.

In His sovereignty God has determined that His promise is to those who believe. God's sovereignty shows itself above all in the fact that He will give. That which God gives has to be accepted as a gift of His mercy. God never permits man to come presenting claims.

II THE PERSONS ADDRESSED ARE A GENTILE CHURCH (10:1-4)

1. Paul's heart is drawn to his spiritual kindred (10:1).
"Brethren, with all my heart's desire and good will for Israel I long and pray to God that they may be saved." Paul feels the great gulf which separates him meanwhile from his kinsmen according to the flesh. His inmost desire and his supplication to God are in their interest, with a view to their salvation.
2. The good qualities of the Jews compel Paul's affection (10:2).
They have a zeal for God. "They have a certain zeal and enthusiasm for God." They are intensely religious. An unbelieving Jew could interpret his opposition to the lawless gospel of Paul as zeal for the divinely-given promises. It was God's honor for which he stood in refusing the Gospel. This religious earnestness is not regulated by adequate knowledge. *Epignosis* – Knowledge – suggests attainment in religious knowledge.

Paul would not label the Jews' religion as hypocrisy. Enthusiasm that is not enlightened can carry a man very far from God. The Jews were so preoccupied with thoughts of all the works of righteousness which they themselves would offer that they could not see that God now offered them a wholly new righteousness.

3. The failure of the Gospel among the Jews (10:3).
It was due to their ignorance of the righteousness of God. All men need and crave righteousness. And the Jews, in their ignorance of God's righteousness, sought to establish a righteousness of their own. "Their own" is the key to the situation. Their idea was that they could be good men without becoming God's debtors, or owing any thing at all to God.

"Seeking to establish a righteousness (a means of salvation) of their own, they did not submit themselves to God's righteousness." Such idea shows their ignorance of the essential relations of

God and man, and when acted on fatally perverts life. It did so with the Jews. When the Gospel came, revealing the righteousness of God – that for which man must be absolutely indebted to God's grace, and which he can never boast of as "his own" – it cut right across all the habits and prejudices of the Jews. And they did not submit themselves to it. Paul interprets the position of his nation through the recollection of his own experience as a Pharisee. Recall the woman at the well. The Jews had no conception of God's gift of righteousness.

4. Christ is the Law's end (10:4).

The sense required is that with Christ in the field, Law as a means of attaining righteousness has ceased and desisted. The moment a man sees Christ and understands who He is and what Christ has done, man feels that legal religion is a thing of the past. The way to righteousness is not the observance of statutes, no matter though they have been promulgated, by God Himself. It is FAITH, the abandonment of the soul to the redeeming judgment and mercy of God in His SON. The LAW ends when Christ appears.

Christ consummates or fulfills the Law. Christ is also the GOAL of the Old Testament dispensation. The LAW is designed to lead to Christ. Paul is insisting on the incompatibility of one's own righteousness, but he also insists on the reality of one's own faith and the righteousness of God. The revelation of the righteousness of God is in Christ. It belongs to every one who believes. Through INCARNATION and RESURRECTION Christ is near us.

III TWO WAYS OF ATTAINING RIGHTEOUSNESS – LAW AND FAITH (10:5-10)

1. Paul shows that "Law" and "FAITH" are mutually exclusive (10:5).

Moses' authority is unimpeachable on this point. The righteousness that comes from "LAW" must be an achievement. The man who has done it shall live in it. Moses in writing did not mock his people. The Old Testament Religion, though an imperfect, was a real religion, under which men could be right with God.

To keep the LAW of God and live by doing so was the natural aim and hope of a true Israelite. In this case, the Law was not just a collection of statutes, but a revelation of God's character and will. He who sought to keep the LAW did so not alone, but in conscious dependence on God whose GRACE was shown above all things else by His gift of such a revelation.

Paul's idea no doubt is that the road leads nowhere. To keep the LAW thus is an impossibility. Paul writes with Pharisees and legalists in his eyes, and with the remembrance of his own experience as a Pharisee in his heart. Christ having come, the day of the Law was over – it was annulled. Walking in the Spirit has now taken the place of walking by ordinances..

2. "FAITH" is open and accessible to all (10:6-7).

It is the righteousness of faith itself which speaks, describing its own character and accessibility. It is not a quotation we find here, but a free reproduction and still freer application of a very familiar passage in the Old Testament (Deut.30:12-14). As the representative of the righteousness of FAITH, Paul is putting his own thoughts. Paul puts his own inspired conviction and experience of the Gospel into a free reproduction of these ancient inspired words.

Do not think, especially thoughts you would be ashamed to utter. There is no impossible preliminary to be accomplished before the true religion is got under way. We have neither to scale heaven nor descend into the abyss. In Paul's mind: The first means to bring Christ down; the second means to bring Christ up from the dead.

The Righteousness of FAITH is concerned with a Christ of whom both these things are true. Incarnation and the Resurrection. We could not bring about either by any effort. And we do not need to – the CHRIST INCARNATE and RISEN is here already, God's gift to FAITH.

3. Through the Incarnation and the Resurrection Christ is near us (10:8).
What is in the lips of the Apostle is near to all who hear. Here it is the Gospel, the WORD which deals with that FAITH on which the righteousness of God depends. The whole idea is that righteousness has not to be achieved, but only appropriated. Salvation is at hand, and the word about this salvation is near us. The great difficulty is the heart's subjection to God's WORD and WILL.
4. The exaltation of Jesus is the fundamental Christian confession (10:9).
The gospel is God's WORD concerning HIS Son and faith in Him. We confess it when we say, Jesus is LORD. It is Christ's exaltation which is here meant by His Lordship. The confession of the first part of the verse answers to the faith in the second. He who believes in his heart that God raised Christ from the dead can confess with his mouth (in that sense) that Jesus is Lord. On the basis of such mutually interpreting faith and confession he is saved.

Christ could not be raised unless He had first died. When Christ was raised it was with the virtue of His SIN-ATONING death in Him. Christ's exaltation is that of the ONE who has borne our sins. The sense of this gives passion to the love with which we believers confess Him LORD.

5. To be saved one must attain heart-faith (10:10).
To confess Christ as Lord and to believe in His Resurrection are basically one and the same. Paul uses both because he is referring to the Old Testament quotation in which both are found. It is natural for Paul to couple righteousness and faith. Also to couple Salvation and confession of Christ as Lord. His purpose is to guard against doing violence to its true significance.

Such FAITH that leads to salvation must confess itself. A heart-believing unto righteousness, and a mouth making confession unto salvation, are not really two things. They are two sides of the same thing. "Confession with the mouth" will follow the "faith of the elect." Salvation is dependent on faith in Christ and the confession of Him as Lord.

IV THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION IS BY FAITH (10:11-16)

1. The main idea is that "faith saves" (10:11-12).
Isaiah 28:16 – The Jews had been taught that simple faith in the Messiah was God's way. Christ is Lord of all, and He is rich unto all that call upon Him. The universal availability of salvation is gloriously opened out here, and is based upon the universal Lordship of Christ.

"There is no distinction between Jew and Greek." There is no distinction between them in point of SIN. There is no distinction between them in that the same LORD is waiting to save all on the same conditions. The same Lord is Lord of all. In Christ's presence, in view of HIS work and His present relation to men, all differences disappear.

There can be only one religion. Christ can impart to all men what all men need – the righteousness of God. To be a Christian, as Paul conceives him, Christ has at least the religious value of God. The Christian soul has that adoring attitude to Christ which was characteristic of Old Testament religion. A sinful man must make appeal for salvation to Christ in prayer, as to

ONE in whom all God's saving judgments and mercy dwell bodily. Salvation depends on this. It rests with Christ to make a man partaker in the righteousness of God and eternal life.

2. Christ stands completely in God's place in all that concerns salvation (10:13-15).
Every one who invokes the name of the Lord shall be saved. First, salvation is promised. Second, it is a be-saved – not save-yourself – salvation. Third, It is the Lord who is to do it. Fourth, The Lord does it for those who call on His Name.

The conditions of invoking the name of the Lord shall be put within reach of every one. The invocation of Christ is the sole and universal condition of salvation. It has been made possible for all men. The voice of the preacher is identified with that of Christ. The LORD is heard speaking when they speak.

God has done every thing that man might come to faith. In Christ God has laid the basis for His message. God has sent forth His heralds to proclaim the message, that Israel might hear it.

3. There has not been a universal surrender to the Gospel (10:16).
It depends whether Israel believes the message she has heard. Israel has heard the message. The Jews are present to the Apostle's mind. "They have not all heeded the Gospel." The lament is over the practically universal unbelief. Paul expresses his own experience in his vocation – "Who has believed the message delivered by us Apostles?"

V FAITH COMES FROM THE GOSPEL MESSAGE RECEIVED BY THE HEARER (10:17-21).

1. There must be a message and a messenger sent from God (10:17-18).
Christ accompanies His preached Word. It is a "quickened" word, that creates living faith. Christ must utter His creating word from heaven to the dead soul. Christ has committed – "placed in us" – the word of reconciliation.

FAITH comes through hearing the WORD concerning Christ. To hear is necessary in order to believe. The Gospel has been preached in all the world. Paul knew the extent to which the Gospel had been proclaimed in his day. The poetic inspired expression for this had a charm of its own.

2. A plea on behalf of Israel (10:19-20).
"Did Israel not understand?" You cannot say, "they did not hear". Surely you do not mean to say, then, "Israel did not understand". The passages next contrast Israel with the Gentiles. Above all nations Israel ought to have understood a message from God. Israel, and inability to understand God's Word, ought to be incompatible ideas.

Protos – First – suggests the beginning of a line of witnesses to this effect. Even Moses at the very beginning of their history. If the Gentiles – peoples beyond the Covenant – were to be called into God's Kingdom and could understand the Gospel, surely a privileged and religiously gifted people like the JEWS was surely inexcusable if it failed to understand the Gospel. God seeks to provoke them to jealousy.

"I have been found by those who did not seek Me." God has let Himself be found by those who did not seek Him and been revealed to those who did not ask for Him. It was an act of great daring to speak thus to Israel. And Paul who needed the same courage in carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles was the man to see this. *May Eperotosin* – Not Inquiring – those who put no

question to Paul about the way of salvation.

Paul refers to God's spontaneous unmerited goodness. God takes the initiative, unsolicited in showing mercy to faithless Jews who made no appeal to HIM and never sought HIM. Paul applies to the reception of the Gospel by the Gentiles. If God was found and recognized in His character and purposes, where all the conditions seemed so much against it, surely ISRAEL must be inexcusable if it has missed the meaning of the Gospel.

The very calling of the Gentiles, predicted and interpreted as it is in the passages quoted, should itself have been a message to the Jews, which they could not misunderstand. It should have opened their eyes as with a lightening flash to the position in which they stood. The JEWS were men who had forfeited their place among the people of GOD. The outsiders had welcomed the righteousness of FAITH.

3. Israel despised God's incessant pleading love (10:21).

This happened consistently all through her history. "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a people unyielding and disobedient and self-willed. This is God Himself – what yearning, what love, what pleading, what patience! The JEWS denied their Prophets and even their own Messiah.

It is not want of knowledge, nor want of intelligence. It is willful and stubborn disobedience that explains the exclusion of Israel from the Kingdom of Christ and all its blessings. Their ignorance had its root in the will. Its root was in the pride of a heart which was determined to have a righteousness of its own without coming under any obligation to GOD for it, and which therefore cannot assume the attitude to which the Gospel becomes credibly Divine. Their ignorance gives its full significance to GUILT.

CONCLUSION:

One can hear and yet not heed. Israel heard the Gospel of the righteousness of God, but refused to submit to it. Israel held fast to her own righteousness, righteousness by the LAW. God has made Righteousness and Salvation depend on FAITH. Only they who believe are "the children of promise". Therefore he who does not believe must be rejected. Israel has both heard and understood God's message – but she rejected it in disobedience and unbelief. Therefore Israel has now been rejected herself by God.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

November 5, 1969

ISRAEL'S REJECTION NOT FINAL

ROMANS 11:1-36

INTRODUCTION:

Is the Righteousness of FAITH contrary to God's promise? Chapter nine presents GOD as Sovereign. Chapter ten proclaims that "Israel has sinned." Both of these are presented in relative independence as explanations of the perplexing fact which confronted the Apostle. Namely: The JEWS did not receive the Gospel, while the GENTILES did.

In chapter eleven the two are brought into relation to each other. We are shown (to some extent) how in the sovereign providence of God even the SIN of Israel is made to contribute to the working out of a universal purpose of redemption. It is a redemption in which Israel also shares, in accordance with the inviolable promise of God.

DISCUSSION:

I HAS GOD BROKEN HIS EXPRESS AND REPEATED PROMISE? (11:1-10).

1. Israel not finally cast off (11:1-2).

The unbelief of Israel naturally suggested it. *May Genoito* – May it not be – Israel may be faithless to God, but God abides faithful. It may be thought: "God has not cast off His people. Paul himself is a living proof to the contrary." Paul says: "I, too, am an Israelite, to whom the very idea of God's rejection of His people is an impious and incredible idea, to be repelled with horror."

Phulaes Beniamein – Of The Tribe of Benjamin – the one tribe Benjamin which, with Judah, mainly represented the Post-Exilic theocratic people. Israel's present rejection is of course an incontrovertible fact, the inescapable consequence of Israel's rejection of the Messiah.

In Paul's first answer (9:6-29), he has spoken of God's sovereignty. God chooses whom HE will, and whom HE will HE rejects. So man can present himself with no claims on God. God did not give His promises to Israel according to the flesh, but to those who believe.

In Paul's second answer (9:30—10:21), Paul has shown that the rejection of Israel is her own fault. When God makes His promises depend on faith, but Israel seeks her righteousness by the Law, the only possible result is the rejection of Israel. Israel had broken with the order which God established. So it cannot be said that God breaks His promises, when HE rejects Israel according to the flesh.

"God has not rejected and disowned His people whose destiny He had marked out and appointed and foreknown from the beginning." Israel stood before God's eyes from eternity as His people. And in the immutableness of the sovereign love with which HE made it His lies the impossibility of its rejection. This is the alternative. He who says, God has cast off Israel, must be ignorant of what Scripture says.

2. An election saved (11:3-4).

"Lord, they have killed your prophets." Sections of the Bible are designated by some descriptive phrase. This phrase means to plead with God against Israel (I Kings 19:10). The Apostle, like Elijah, was lonely and persecuted. And Israel as a whole seemed to have abandoned God or been abandoned by God. But Paul understands God's way and His faithfulness better.

"I have kept for myself seven thousand men." God gives His answer to His Interest in the remnant. God has a purpose of His own identified with them. God has reserved the seven thousand for Himself. It is on this the proof depends that God has not cast off His people. The seven thousand are ISRAEL to God. These are described by their character. Such were those whom God reserved for Himself – men who never bowed knee to Baal. Israel continues in the individuals in the remnant – is God's answer to Paul.

3. It is God who makes the remnant by His choice (11:5-6).

The very existence of the remnant is a witness to God's faithfulness to Covenant. The remnant is chosen by God's GRACE. Every saved Israelite must believe on Christ as a common sinner.

Grace and works are mutually exclusive. "It is by grace" (11:6). Nothing a man can do gives him a claim as of right against God to be included in the remnant. The fact that there is a remnant, and one owing its existence to God's grace, is the proof that (in spite of the wholesale defection of Israel) God has not cast off His people.

"GRACE" is God acting sovereignly according to Himself. "WORKS" is man seeking to present to God a human ground for blessing. The two principles are utterly opposed. Israel thought that, as God's chosen people, they could come with claims on God and need not depend wholly on GRACE. That was the very reason why "Israel according to the flesh" had to be rejected. But according to God's Election, the "REMNANT" had been brought to faith in Christ. It comes before God with no claims. It knows it is wholly dependent on God's grace - and is the spiritual Israel.

4. "Israel after the flesh" was in search of righteousness (11:7).

Their noble efforts were misdirected. They were hardened by God – as a punishment for SIN. It was not the correct way of righteousness. Their own Scripture set forth that "calling on the Name of the Lord" and believing on the "CHRIST" was the true WAY.

5. The act was God's Judgment (11:8-10).

Hearts harden most quickly when men are trusting in their place of special privilege, without fellowship with the God who gives it. "God gave them an attitude of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear." It is defined as a spirit of deep sleep or torpor. Unseeing eyes, unhearing ears – a spirit which produces a condition of insensibility, to which every appeal is vain.

It is God who sends this spirit of stupor. But God does not send it arbitrarily nor at random. God sends it always as a judgment. What Israel had been from the beginning it was when Paul wrote. God had acted toward it from the beginning on the same principle on which HE was acting then.

Paul takes it for granted that the doom invoked in these words has come upon the Jews. Their table in the Psalm is that in which they delight, and it is this which is to prove their ruin. The idea is that of a "snare or trap" – sudden destruction. What the Jews delighted in was the Law, and the Law misunderstood proved their ruin. In seeking a righteousness of their own based upon the law they missed and forfeited the righteousness of God which is given to FAITH in Christ.

The fate of the Jews is the recompense of their sin. It is not a result to be simply referred to a decree of God. Their perverse attitude to the Law is avenged in their incapacity to understand and receive the GOSPEL. "Let their eyes be darkened for ever." Keep them continually in spiritual bondage, stooping under a load too heavy to be borne.

This is the condition in which the Jews found themselves for their self-righteous adherence to the law as a way of salvation. It is a grievous condition for a people chosen by God. Paul looks at the severity of the situation, and hints that the FALL of Israel is not the last thing concerning them to be taken into account. What if God's purpose includes and uses their fall? What if it is not final? Paul deals with this idea in verses 11-24.

II THE FALL OF THE JEWS WAS MADE THE OCCASION OF SALVATION TO THE GENTILES (11:11-24).

1. God's future salvation for the nation (11:11-12).

Pesosin – They might fall – surely they did not stumble so as to fall? The subject is the mass of the Jewish Nation, all but the elect remnant. "Fall" – is meant an irremediable fall, from which there is no rising. By their moral fall salvation has come to the Gentiles to provoke the unbelieving Israelites to jealousy. This fact is illustrated at every point in Paul's own ministry.

Paul turned to the Gentiles because they would not hear him. The end in view in it is his proof that the stumbling of the Jews is not to be interpreted in the sense of a final FALL. A recovery is in prospect.

To Playroma Auton – The Fullness Of Them – must mean the making-up of them to their full numbers. "If the Gentiles have been enriched in a sense through the very miscarriage and disaster of Israel what wealth is in store for them in the great RETURN, when all Israel shall be saved – when God hath made the pile complete." The enrichment referred to in both cases is that which comes through participating in the blessings of the Gospel.

We cannot blame God for Israel's rejection of the Messiah and their Fall. God foretold it. Christ told them: "Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." Salvation has come out as riches to the whole world and to Gentiles.

2. Paul's mission to the Gentiles has an indirect bearing on his own countrymen (11:13-14).

There were many Jewish saints at Rome. The more successful Paul can make his ministry to the Gentiles, the greater is the prospect that some of the Jews also may be saved. Every Jew who is saved goes to make up the *Playroma* - full-number, and bring on a time of blessing for the Gentile world.

Paul was conscious of his vocation as an Apostle to the Gentiles. He also felt that in his particular case at all events a mission to the Gentiles could not but include this ulterior reference to the Jews. His devotion to his Gentile ministry never let the Jews fall out of view. "If by any means I may save some of the Jews." Disenchanted experience taught him to speak thus.

Israel kata sarka – Israel according to the flesh – Paul considers Israel according to the flesh. Paul expects that some good will come to them through his work to the Gentiles. Paul is indirectly a fellow-worker for the salvation of the Jews. He hopes and looks forward to when the whole of Israel as a people will accept Christ in faith. He considers his own work a preparation

for that end. To save any JEW was a great object.

3. A world's reconciliation is the act of God (11:15-16).

The Jews' rejection by God was on the ground of their unbelief. Reconciliation was the act of God in Christ for the mass of mankind, and only took effect when Jewish unbelief diverted the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul feels sure that Israel has a future. So he places them in God's favor.

By the offering of the first fruits the whole mass, and the whole produce of the land, were consecrated. He illustrates the relation of the Patriarchs to the people as a whole. As chosen by God, the fathers were God's people. And this standing belongs inalienably to the children. They are God's, and it will yet become apparent that they are.

4. Gentiles have been set in the place of blessing from Abraham (11:17-18).

Gentiles have been put into that place of Divine blessing where Israel once stood. The presumptuous individual is before the Apostle's mind. The cultivated branch is always en-grafted upon the wild stock. The force of Paul's reproof to the presuming Gentiles turns on the fact that the process was an unnatural one. It gave the Gentile no room to boast over the rejected Jews.

The Gentile shares with the Jews in the virtues of a root which is not Gentile, but Jewish. The Gentile has his part in the consecration of the Patriarchs, the one historical root of the people of God, and in the blessings God attached to it. He is a partaker in the root of the fat olive tree.

"Remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you." We are beneficiaries of those promises that God lodged in Abraham. All the promises we inherit in Christ. There is no formal connection. You owe all you are proud of to an artificially-formed relation to the race you would despise.

5. The security of the Gentiles depended on faith (11:19-21).

"Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." The presumptuous Gentile persists "The branches were broken off - that surely involves some superiority in me." The despising of the Jews is one of the great scandals of history.

Paul prefers to point out what is overlooked. It is the moral conditions of men, and he urges them on the conscience. Jews were broken off on account of unbelief. The security of the Gentiles depended on faith. It is the most elementary principle of a religion that it excludes boasting.

The Jews had been more securely invested in the kingdom than the Gentiles (11:21). They were in the language of the figure, not artificially grafted, but native branches, on the TREE of God's people. Yet even that did not prevent God from cutting off those who did not believe. And if God did not spare the Jews, He will not spare the Gentiles either – if in pride they fall from the FAITH.

6. Behold God's goodness and God's severity (11:22-23).

The Jews lost their standing because they had come to believe that it was indefectible, and independent of moral conditions. And if the Gentiles commit the same mistake they will incur the same doom. It is not to Israel only God may say: "The Kingdom is taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Remember Israel fell into self-righteousness, pride, and rejection of the Messiah. And Christ beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. Judgment is God's strange work. The Gentiles were put into the place of privilege and opportunity of Divine blessing. God's goodness was extended to them.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is the message of any ambassador.

The hardening spoken of earlier is a judgment upon SIN. Even in the most hardened rejector of the Gospel we are not to limit either the sources of God's power, or the possibilities of change in a self-conscious, self-determining creature. All things are possible to him that believeth. We are not to say that unbelief is final. If the Jews give up their unbelief they will be incorporated again in the true people of God.

The phrase implies the difficulty of the operation. "If they do not persist in clinging to their unbelief." With man it is impossible, but not with God. Nothing less than the thought of God could keep Paul from despairing of the future of Israel.

7. Gentiles are placed in the place of direct Divine blessing, once enjoyed by Israel (11:24). "If you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and against nature grafted into a cultivated olive tree." In the process of grafting we select a shoot of a fruit-bearing limb of a desirable tree. And opening the bark of an inferior tree of the same species, we insert the shoot, tying it in well. Then, behold, this inferior tree supplies sap to this good shoot. But the en-grafted shoot goes on to bear its own good variety and class of fruit, and not that of the inferior tree. This is nature.

Now, the exact contrary has been wrought by God in taking the Gentiles, and grafting them into the good olive tree to partake of the tree of Divine blessing. We produce that "fruit unto God," which belongs to the good olive tree – and not to the wild olive Gentile.

The Gentile Christian was cut from what is in its own nature an uncultivated olive. It had no suitability for the uses which the olive is intended to subservise. And in violation of nature it was en-grafted into a good olive. Paul believes in his logic. Paul has in view the restoration of the Jews of which he now proceeds to speak.

III THERE IS A CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SALVATION OF THE JEWS AND THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD (11:25-32).

1. From both Jewish and Gentile believers Christ is now creating ONE NEW MAN (11:25). "I do not want you to miss this hidden truth and mystery, brethren." Paul is now speaking to the saints as such. The rejection of the Jews has led to the calling of the Gentiles. By provoking the Jews to jealousy is eventually to lead to their conversion too. It is Paul's construction and interpretation of the facts before him.

The central truth that Paul has been expounding is that the hardening of Israel is temporary as well as partial. When "the fulness of the Gentiles" has come in the hardening will cease, and all Israel will be saved. Paul puts this truth forward as a revelation.

For Paul this is an essential part of true religion. For Paul it had a Divine authority. Think what we will of it, but there the Jews are – a problem to unbelief as well as to faith. Providence is not preserving them for nothing. There is a close connection between their salvation and the salvation of the world.

Mustaerion – Mystery – is used 21 times by Paul. It always refers to something which, though once hidden, or in its nature a secret, is now revealed. In some passages it is applied to the Christian revelation as a whole. In Colossians 2:2 it is identified with Christ. In the Gospel it is

the destined inclusion of the Gentiles among the people of God. In the passage before us it is used to claim for Paul the authority of revelation.

It is something which has been communicated to Paul for the good of the Church. "Hardening" in part has come upon Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. But the Gentiles are not in a place of permanent and exclusive privilege. "*Pleroma Tone Ethnown*" – "Fullness of the Nations" – does not mean a number pre-determined beforehand, which has to be made up. It means the Gentiles in their full strength. When they have come in, the power which is to provoke Israel to jealousy will be fully felt.

2. Paul is thinking of Israel as a part of the Messianic Kingdom (11:26).
"And so all Israel will be saved." Under the influence of the jealousy so excited – under the impression produced on the Jews by the sight of the Gentiles in their fulness peopling the Kingdom – all Israel shall be saved. Paul is thinking of Israel as a Christian nation. He foretells the conversion of the Jews – and the rest who were hardened will disappear. Salvation is surely for the Jews.
3. This is the Constitution which I give them to live under (11:27-28).
"This will be my covenant." It covers the Whole condition introduced by the removal of sins. The deliverance is an ethical and a religious one. The deliverance in question is to be immediately followed by the resurrection.

"*Kata*" – "According to" – defines the rule by which God's relation to Israel is determined. When God looks at the Gospel, which Israel has rejected, they are objects of God's hostility. When God looks at the choice HE made of Israel to be His people, they are objects of His love – with whom HE made an everlasting covenant.

4. Israelites are objects of God's love (11:29).
God's way of Salvation for Israel goes through unbelief to faith, through fall to restoration, through rejection to final acceptance. "God never withdraws His gifts and His call once they are given." Paul tries to present how GOD has acted. Israel is rejected, but Paul sees a Divine purpose which God has disclosed to him. Israel must be rejected that she may be accepted. Rejection is the way in which God carries Israel on toward Salvation.

God's gifts of grace, and HIS calling, are things upon which there is no going back. *Charismata* – Free gifts – are the privileges of grace given to Israel. *Klaysia* – Calling – is God's authoritative invitation to a part in the Messianic Kingdom. From Israel these things can never be withdrawn.

5. God is working out His universal purpose of redemption (11:30-32).
Israel must first be cast down from her self-confidence. She must come to see how multitudes of Gentiles enter into God's Kingdom, while Israel has no part in it. Israel in her pride will not accept mercy. But when Israel is rejected as only "a vessel of wrath" before God, then she will finally become ready for God to make her into a "vessel of mercy."

There is a Divine necessity pervading and controlling all the freedom of men. A Divine purpose is mastering all the random activity of human wills. Verse 32, "God shut them all up into disobedience that He might have mercy upon them all." This is the nearest approach made in the New Testament to putting the sin of man into a direct and positive relation to the act and purpose of God. Salvation is to come to Jew and Gentile alike by way of free GRACE. Every difference between Jew and Gentile has been removed.

IV THE WAYS OF GOD IN VIEW OF HIS MERCIES (11:33-36).

1. God's Providence (11:33).

Paul adores the unsearchable wealth of love that enables God to meet the necessities of the world. "How unsearchable are God's judgments." Love less deep would soon be bankrupt at the task. The intellectual resources are brought into view with which God has ordered, disposed and controlled all the forces of the world and of man's history so as to make them subservient to His love.

When we see the world in the light of God as Paul saw it, we see a conscious purpose transcending human thought, and calling forth adoring praise. Wisdom and knowledge – in relation to God – is to be felt rather than defined. God has granted Paul a glimpse into HIS plan, and Paul stands filled with wonder.

2. The unsearchableness of God's ways (11:34-35).

"Who has known the mind of the Lord..." None : till God chooses to unfold it. Christ has been made the wisdom of God unto us. The initiative in religion belongs to God. We have nothing that we did not receive. Boasting is excluded. Without God's revelation and guidance no one can know why God acts as HE does.

3. GOD is the one great CAUSE and SOURCE (11:36).

God will be in no creature's debt. If somebody has actually supplied something to God, God will quickly recompense him. God does not suffer any one to appear before HIM with pretensions.

Through God's continuous energy the world is sustained and ruled. All exist for God's glory. *Ta Panta* – All Things – the whole marvelous action of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge in regard to the work of redemption. The universe of grace, with all that goes on it for the salvation of Jew and Gentile, is of God and through GOD. To God be the glory.

CONCLUSION:

God's thoughts and ways are entirely different from man's. Without God's revelation and guidance no one can know why God acts as He does. God even uses man's disobedience as a means for effecting His saving will. All depends on God's sovereign will. In it all God's mercy triumphs.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

November 6, 1969

THE LIFE OF HIM THROUGH FAITH IS RIGHTEOUS

An Overview of
ROMANS 12:1-15:13

INTRODUCTION:

This remaining part of the Epistle may be described as the practical part of it. Christian Ethics are relative to the Christian revelation. It is the relation, in which we stand that determines our duties. The new relations in which we are set both to God and to other men by faith in Jesus Christ have a new morality corresponding to them. It is under practical compulsion of some kind that Paul develops most of his characteristic doctrines. Paul has no doctrines which do not imply a corresponding practice.

There is no such thing as a Christian Ethic without a range, a delicacy a flavor, all its own. There is no formal exposition of it here – but the best comprehensive illustration of it found in the New Testament in a variety of bearings. We here have an illustration of the matchless logic which controls Paul's thought. "He who through faith, is righteous shall live" – continues to be Paul's theme.

A Gospel which has no significance for man's life and conduct is not a real Gospel. Life and conduct which are not based on that which comes to us in the Gospel are not Christian life and Christian conduct. The issue before us concerns the Christian's conduct. How is that to be shaped? It must be molded and shaped in harmony with the new aeon. The "NEW LIFE" is a life "in Christ" and a life "in love".

In 12:1ff, Paul starts with a general exhortation, covering the Whole Christian life. In 12:3-21, Paul proceeds to the spirit and the temper which ought to characterize the Christians as members of the same society. Paul dwells especially on the graces of humility and love.

In chapter 13:1-7 Paul discusses the duties of the individual to his legal superiors. In 13:8-10, Paul discusses the individual's duties to his neighbor, as comprehended in the Love which fulfills the Law. In 13:11-14, Paul discusses the urgent duty of sanctification in view of the Parousia.

With chapter 14, Paul comes to a different subject, and apparently one of peculiar interest in Rome at the time. The claim of Christian liberty had to accommodate itself to the social necessity created by the weakness of brethren. This discussion extends to 15:13. It concludes the practical part of the Epistle.

Paul's line of thought falls into TWO main DIVISIONS: (1) Conduct in harmony with the new Aeon; (12:1-13:14). (2) The weak and the strong (14:1-15:13).

CONDUCT IN THE NEW AEON

ROMANS 12:1-21

INTRODUCTION:

Here is Paul's central view of the ethical life of the Christian. It is his view of the conduct of one who through faith is righteous. The ethical requirements are bound up to the new situation which Christ brought. These requirements grow directly out of it.

Recall a single illustration in 6:4. Paul spoke of how, through baptism, we are incorporated into Christ and united with HIM in participation in His death and resurrection. From that Paul immediately drew the conclusion that we should "walk in newness of life". In that statement Paul has given the formula for that which is now to be discussed. So now we should put our conduct into harmony with the new aeon. That is the basic rule in Paul's ethics.

DISCUSSION:

I THE BASIC RULE OF PAUL'S ETHICS (12:1-2)

1. The shaping of the Christian life (12:1).

The reference is especially to what has just preceded. The "*Oun*" – Therefore – shows the dependence of the practical upon the doctrinal. "I beg of you in view of all the mercies of God".

It is the new world of realities to which the soul is introduced by the Christian revelation on which Christian morality depends. It is relative to that world, and would become unreal along with it. It indicates that in which the motive is found.

The mercies are those which God has shown in the work of redemption through Christ. Paul calls for our response to the great unfoldings of God's Salvation. These mercies may be listed as:

- A. Justification – pardon, removal of sin, a standing in Christ.
- B. Identification – dead to sin and to law, and now in Christ.
- C. Under Grace – to be fruit unto God, unto sanctification.
- D. The Spirit Indwelling – no condemnation, witness of sonship.
- E. No separation possible – God loves us in Christ. God's settled purpose.

2. Paul's plea for personal consecration to God (12:1b).

Faith in God's mercies has power. It is the goodness of God that moves us. "Make a decisive dedication of your bodies – presenting all your members and faculties – as a living sacrifice." It is the putting of the body at the disposal of God. The body is in view here as the instrument by which all human service is rendered to God.

The service which the body does render is not a bodily, but a spiritual service. "Living" – as opposed to the slain animals offered by the Jews. The "new life" as a whole is a "thank offering" to God. "A living sacrifice" – present the body as the organ of all moral action to God. It is the only thing that can be characterized as spiritual worship. Any other thing coming under the description of worship is foreign to the Christian. It would not be appropriate to God.

3. Each BELIEVER is to discover God's will for his life (12:2).

Believers, before they were saved, walked according to the course of this world. We read that

Cain "went out from the presence of Jehovah and builded a city, its whole being to forget God." Satan has developed such a fatal-world order. So Paul asks the Saints to be transformed by the renewing of their minds.

"Do not adopt the fleeting fashion of this world, but be ye transformed in your inmost nature." The world is an evil world, of which SATAN is the god. Conformity to a system controlled by such a spirit, much more accommodations to its ways, would be fatal to the Christian life.

By nature, the Christian is at home in this world; such as it is, its life and his life are one. And his deliverance is accomplished as he is transformed by the renewing of his mind. "Mind" – the intellectual and moral, practical reason, moral consciousness. This is corrupted in the natural man, and renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit.

"Regeneration" – is the purpose of the transforming renewal of the mind. It is that Christians may prove in their experience what the will of God is. An "UNRENEWED MIND" is destitute of moral discernment, has no proper moral faculty – and cannot do this.

The WILL of GOD is identified with what is good in the moral sense. No one discovers the will of God unless he is transformed from his native affinity to the world by the renewing of his mind by the Holy Spirit. The object of this "renewing" is the SOUL – which includes the mind, with its thoughts, the imagination, feelings – all are operated upon by the Holy Spirit, after one's regeneration. The Christian has a new ethical judgment giving him the ability to prove what God's will is in the concrete situation.

II WE ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, WITH VARYING GIFTS (12:3-8)

1. The duties of the members of the Church as such (12:3).

Avoid self-exaltation. Mutual service is to be in the measure of the gift bestowed on each. "Rate your ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him." Humility is the immediate effect of self-surrender to God. Paul illustrates in his own person, and speaks through the grace given him. He puts his wisdom and love at the service of the Church..

To himself, every man is in a sense the most important person in the world. One always needs much grace to see what other people are, and to keep a sense of moral proportion. *Dei Phronein* – It Behooves To Think – beyond the mind or habit of thought one ought to have. To cherish a habit of thought tending to sobriety of mind. They suggest the importance to character, especially to Christian character – of the prevailing mood of the moral temper, as it might be called.

It should always tend to sobriety. Whatever the characteristic of any individual. may be, it is due to the discriminating act of God in measuring out faith to him in greater or less degree. The idea seems to be: There are various degrees of self-estimation proper, for God gives one more and another less. But all are fundamentally regulated by humility, for no one has any thing that he has not received.

"Rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him." By himself he is nothing. What he is, he is through belonging to Christ. In that relation his place is assigned to him, and he must respect its limits as determined by God. Each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

2. The Social Organism (12:4-5).

Every member has its gift, but it is limited by the fact that it is no more than a member. It is not the whole body. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. The Christian must not strive to be every thing. We are one body in Christ. It is the common relation to Christ which unites us.

Christ is the head of the body. His own figure of the vine and the branches combines the advantages of both. It is not a unity in which individuality is lost. The individuals retain their value, only not as independent wholes, but as members one of another. Each and all exist only in each other, none being either greater or less than the rest.

3. We are members in our mutual relations (12:6-8).

Through faith we belong to Christ. In baptism we have been fitted in with Christ and joined to HIM. So we are one body in Christ. We were given a special function to fulfill in its organism. We were given special gifts needed for our special function. God dispenses many different gifts, to each HE gives something different. Any attempt to disregard these differences conflicts with God's will.

It is as though Paul said: We are members one of another, and have gifts differing according to the grace given to us. Our gift may be prophecy, prophecy in the proportion of our faith. It may be practical service in the sphere appropriate for that. A man may have the gift of showing mercy and so is endowed with a cheerful disposition. "Now having gifts differing according to the grace given to us." Let us use them with humility, remembering they are gifts. Use them with love, remembering we are members one of another.

There is no hint of any thing official in this passage. All ministry is a function of membership in the body, and every member has the function of ministry to some intent or other. *Charismata* – Gifts – is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to the believer for the good of the Church. It is in the proportion of faith – the measure of which is assigned by God. One owes his GIFT absolutely to God. The more completely Christian one is, the the prophetic endowment will be. We have only a description of fact.

Services were prompted by the Spirit and done in obedience to it. One who has "this gift" has it in the qualities and in the sphere proper to it. It is in its oval nature limited. It fits a man for this function and no more or other. *Didaskalia* – Teaching – the teacher possesses the gift peculiar to him. The functionary is merely said to have his gift in his function – teaching, exhorting, service, etc.

In verse 8 he tells us what the gift, proper to the special functions in view, is. The spiritual quality, when divinely bestowed, capacitates a man to do this or that for the Church. It is the quality of a mind which gives because it sees the need. God assigns the function. "GRACE" – fits one for the special function.

III WALK IN LOVE (12:9-21).

1. Let your love be sincere (12:9).

Let it be the real thing. Love is the unaffected Christian grace. It shrinks, as with a physical horror, from that which it evil. It cleaves to that which is good. Love is not a principle of mutual indulgence. In the Gospel it is a moral principle. Like Christ, Who is the only perfect example of love, it always has something inexorable about it. Christ never condoned evil.

2. The basis of the new life (12:10).

The new life is characterized by the fact that it is a life "in love". The Christian's conduct in love is only a reflex of the love which Christ has shown to him. "Love one another with brotherly affection." Brotherly love – your love to each other as children in the one family of God. It is the mutual affection of the fellow-Christians of the members of the Christian community. They are to be tenderly affectioned to each other.

Moral purity is required as a mark of Christian love. As members of the Christian family, their love is to have the characters of strong natural affection. It is to be warm, spontaneous, constant. *Charismata* – Gifts – Give each other honor and respect in the Church. Recognize and honor God's gift in a brother.

"LOVE"- is the circulation of the blood in the body of Christ, through which all its parts and members are related to each other and bound together in a oneness. It is love that makes the members share each other's lot, bear each other's burdens, and share each other's joy. Love comes from Christ, and flows from one to another.

3. The moral earnestness with which one should give himself to his vocation (12:11).

Christians are not to be backward. "Be aglow and burning with the Spirit." The spiritual temperature is to be high in the Christian community. *Pneumati* – In Spirit – is the Spirit of God. It is that SPIRIT as bestowed on man. There are spiritual gifts of all kinds, but one service in which they are all exhausted – the service of Christ. In HIS service we must be constantly engaged.

4. Love is the subject throughout (12:12-15).

There is to be constancy in prayer. Effort is needed to maintain a habit so much above our nature. Patience in trial is the path to our perfecting.

"The Saints" are the Christians generally. "Sharing in the necessities of the saints" – dates from an age in which "the saints" were the select few and martyrs in the technical sense. It is the liberality of our contribution to them. To devote oneself to entertaining them when they were strangers was one chief way of distributing to the needs of the saints.

"Hospitality" – is a form of charity much needed by traveling, or persecuted Christians. It means to go after this business, pursuing it, following it up. The Lord will reward some day even a cup of cold water given in His Name.

"Bless those who are cruel in their attitude toward you." The form of the sentence was given to Paul. Paul was consciously using borrowed words without modifying them to suit the sentence he had begun on his own account. It is not mere outward blessing that is commanded, but refraining from inward reservations. See Luke 6:27.

"Share others' joy." A watchword. Those who rejoice neither need, expect, nor feel grateful for sympathy in the same degree as those who weep. It is easier to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice. Enter into others' sorrow.

5. Love lives in harmony with the brethren (12:16-17).

The idea is that of loving unanimity. It points to the active manifestation of this temper in all the mutual relations of Christians. "Let each so enter into the feelings and desires of the other as to be of one mind with him." An abstract expression of the GOLDEN RULE. Selfish ambition in the Church is fatal to perfect mutual consideration. Love requires that we put our judgment into a

common stock.

"Readily adjust yourself to people, things, and give yourself to humble tasks. Never overestimate yourself." Aspire after the same aims, aiming after the same object for one another as for yourselves. The reference is to charity of attitude. Be of one heart-intent. The Gospel is the only real leveler of us all.

"Take thought for what is honest and proper and noble." (12:17). The subject treated is chiefly the Christian's attitude to enemies. Nothing can ever justify revenge. Take precautions to obviate possible slanders. Live in such a way as not to provoke enmity. Do not give any occasion for breach of peace. Let your conduct be such as all must approve.

Satan and the world hate God's saints who walk with HIM; and will do them all permitted evil. Some real believers are thoughtless; some are jealous. Put far away the expectation of "getting even" with anybody. Take careful thought for your course of Christian behavior. View our lives as a whole – day by day – detecting and rejecting whatever in ourselves others might criticize as not honorable.

6. Over others' conduct we have no control (12:18-19).

"For what depends on you." The initiative in disturbing the peace is never to lie with the Christian. The Christian is to be a peace-liver and a peace-lover, and a peacemaker.

"Leave the way open for God's wrath." Even when the Christian has been wronged he is not to take the law into his own hand, and right or vindicate himself. The natural man is always ready to plead his cause with "wild justice".

The wrath spoken of is that of God. Leave room for God's wrath. Do not take God's proper work out of His hands. Instead of executing vengeance ourselves we are to abandon the offender to the more tremendous vengeance of God. God is the maintainer of moral order in the world – not injured men. The righting of wrong is to be committed to God. Scotland's motto was: "No one treads on me unpunished." This applies to man in the flesh throughout the world.

"Vengeance" belongs to God's province alone. God has infinite knowledge of the conditions, the motives, of results upon others. God has faithfully promised to recompense. "Recompense" – means to pay back, personally and accurately. The Saints must not forget that there is a day of reckoning. Let God's wrath have its course and its sway.

7. The burning pain of shame and remorse (12:20).

This is what the man feels whose hostility is repaid by love. "Heaping burning coals on his head" – This is the only kind of vengeance the Christian is at liberty to contemplate. The aim of the Christian's love to his enemy is thus made to be the bringing down of Divine judgment on him. Some think the coals of fire are the Divine judgments which the sinner will bring on himself unless he repents under such constraint of love. This does not seem to be the exact spirit of the passage. Obedient kindness is our responsibility.

SUMMARY:

In a word, be not overcome by evil – by the evil your enemy inflicts. "EVIL" here connects itself with that hatefulness in others of verse 20. It includes all the evil in the world. "Master evil with good." God sets forth a positive path of good before His saints.

The Christian would be overcome by evil if it were able to compel him to avenge himself by repaying it

in kind. Wrong is not defeated but doubly victorious when it is repelled with its own weapons. We can only overcome it through the good we do to our adversary, turning him so from an enemy into a friend.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

November 11, 1969

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS IN RELATION TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

ROMANS 13:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

In chapter twelve we have discussed the duties of Christians as members of one body. We have emphasized especially the duties of humility and love. There is not a word about how the transition is made to chapter thirteen. In this chapter 13 we study the subject: THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS IN RELATION TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

The GENTILE Christians in Rome were closely connected with the Jews. The Jews were notoriously bad subjects. Many of the Jews held (on ground of Deuteronomy 17:15) that to acknowledge a Gentile ruler was itself sinful. And the spirit which promotes Pharisees to ask: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?" had no doubt its representatives in Rome also.

As believers in the Messiah (Acts 17:7) even Christians of Gentile origin may have been open to the impulses of this same spirit. Unbalanced minds, then as in all ages, might be disposed to find in the loyalty which was due to Christ alone, an emancipation from all subjection to inferior powers. It may have been the knowledge of some such movement of mind in the Church at Rome that made Paul write as he did.

Remember our Lord's word: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to GOD the things that are God's." Nothing can be more worthy of admiration than the soberness with which Paul lays down the Divine right of the State. Paul is thinking of the organization of human society, with its distinction of higher and lower ranks, as essential for the preservation of the moral order. Also for the existence of the Kingdom of God itself. No Christian is at liberty to revolt against the organization.

The State is of God. The Christian has to recognize its Divine right in the persons and the requirements in which it is presented to him. That is all. At this point, the Imperial Authorities had usually protected the Apostle himself against popular violence. The whole discussion presupposes normal conditions. Law and its Representatives are of God. And as such they are entitled to all honor and obedience from Christians.

DISCUSSION:

I THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THE ORDERS OF THIS WORLD (13:1-7)

1. Subjection to Rulers, as ordained of God (13:1-2).

Authorities are in a position of superiority. It is by God's act and will alone that there is such a thing as an "authority", or magistrate. Those that actually exist have been set in their place by God.

Paul passes from the abstract to the concrete. The persons and institutions in which for the time authority had its seat, are before Paul's mind. The Empire with all its grades of officials from the Emperor down – in itself this system had a Divine right to be. It was quite apart from its relation to the Church. It did not need to be legitimated by any special relation to the Church.

"Those that exist are put in place by God." Into the authorities' hands God has committed

external human government. We are to render them their due respect and obedience. Lawlessness is the essence of SIN. Lawlessness is behind and below all law-breaking.

He who sets himself against the authorities withstands what has been instituted by God. The judgment or condemnation which those who offer such resistance shall receive, is of course a Divine one. That is the nerve of the whole passage. To say that it is God's judgment only is not to say that it is eternal damnation. There are many ways in which God's condemnation of SIN is expressed. and executed.

2. Recognize the Divine Right of the State (13:3).

Its representatives are not a terror – an object of dread – to the good works, but to the bad. The STATE will not identify itself with the bad and act in violation of its own idea. Do what is legally and morally good.

"Civil authorities are not a terror to people of good conduct, but to those of bad behavior." Keep practicing that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same. Every Christian, in his life, should be praiseworthy in the eyes of rulers, and, if consistent, he generally is so. The Christians' interests are in Christ. Their responsibility is to acknowledge what is in power as a fact, trusting God as to the consequences, and in no case behaving as a partisan.

3. The maintenance of the moral order in society (13:4).

The State is not conceived as directly serving the person. The State serves God, with good in view as the end to be secured by its ministry. This situation is one, the benefit of which redounds to the individual.

God has placed the Christian in this world and has subjected him to the ruling powers. "The authority is God's servant for your good. He does not bear and wear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant to execute God's wrath or punishment on the wrongdoer." "To bear" – habitual wearing of the sword. "Evil-doing" will cause people to live in terror of government. Let no Christian be in such a position.

Only when the individual does that which is contrary to the end set before the State by God. It is for serious use that the ruler wears the sword. If an individual sets himself to subvert the moral order of the world, its representatives can proceed to extremities against him – on the ground that the moral order is God's institution and it is of priceless value to mankind. *Orgain* – Wrath – the wrath is of God, and is presented to him who works at evil.

4. Governing authorities have been instituted by God (13:5-6).

"One must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience." There are good and bad authorities, God-fearing and godless governments. Some authorities use their powers in harmony with God's will. Others misuse their powers and tramp the will of God under their feet.

There is the wrath of God which comes on resistance. It is an internal one, in conscience. Even apart from the consequences of disobedience conscience recognizes the Divine right and function of the *Exousia* – Authority – and freely submits to it.

Conscience recognizes the moral value of the State as an ordinance of God that we pay taxes. *Phorous* – Taxes – tribute paid by a subject nation. Here it is imposts made for the support of the government. It emphasizes the official character of the service which they render. *Leitourgoi* – Minister, Functionary – it is the official character the word assigns to the magistracy. They are in

their place by God's appointment for the public good. They spend all their time on the work.

The constituted authorities are God's own ministers in governmental things. It is on this account that those governed pay tribute. These ministers of government must be supported. Sometimes God uses unworthy men as means to the accomplishment of His purposes.

5. Duties of all individuals toward, each other (13:7).

God has ordained that the Christian is to live his life in this world. If God has placed him in this existence with its orders, it is not the intention that he shall set himself above them and claim a state of glory in advance. "Render to all men their dues." Paul's judgment is part of his total theological outlook. Paul sets forth the basic Christian view toward worldly government.

II LOVE, THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW (13:8-10).

1. The character of the conduct of the righteous (13:8).

"Keep out of debt and owe no man any thing." Pay up all your dues. Keep this constant obligation before you – "love one another." This is the root and spring of all your actions. Be indebted in the matter of love alone. The one who loves exhibits what the LAW has sought.

2. The COMMANDMENTS are summed up into a single one (13:9).

The order of the Commandments here are different from that in Exodus. The enumeration does not aim at completeness. The scattered particles are resumed and brought to one. Here is given a summary of various laws, mostly precepts enjoining humanity, in various relations. Unlimited range is given to it by Paul.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. Love does every thing that is good. By the aid of the Spirit the Christian receives the ability to achieve the fulfillment of the Law. The Spirit helps him to achieve it through works of love.

3. Love is an inspiration rather than a restraint (13:10).

Playroma Nomou – Fulfillment of Law – Love is Law's fulfillment. Love transcends Law as embodied in merely negative Commandments. The form in which the Law actually existed determines the form in which the Apostle expresses himself. It is the Mosaic Law, and not law in general. It is from IT the prohibitions are derived, on the ground of which the Apostle argues. To it therefore we must apply his conclusion.

"Love does no wrong to one's neighbor. Love meets all the requirements and is the fulfilling of the Law." Where LOVE is, the things which the Law forbids do not occur. There is no longer any thing for the Law to condemn. There is the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, etc." The Law is against SIN, but not against life "in Christ". By life in Christ the LAW is fulfilled. Love is the active principle of Christianity.

III PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (13:11-14)

1. Exhortation to mutual love (13:11).

We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body. "Time now for you to wake up out of your sleep." It is the time they lived in

with its moral import, its critical place in the working out of God's designs. It is their time regarded as having a character of its own, full of significance for them.

"It is time for you at once to awake." No Christian should be asleep. Yet the ordinary life of all is drowsy compared with what it should be – if Christian hope were perpetually present to us.

"For salvation (final deliverance) is nearer to us now than when we first trusted in and relied on Christ." It is the final and complete deliverance from SIN and death, and the reception into the heavenly kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Salvation was always near to the faith of the Apostles. And with the lapse of time it became, of course, nearer.

2. The true day dawns only when Christ appears (13:12).

"The night is far gone and the day is almost here." At present it is night, though a night that has run much of its course. Things that can only be done in the dark – that cannot bear the light of day – are therefore to be put away by Christians. The idea is that the Christian's life is not "a sleep", but a "BATTLE".

"Put on the full armor of light." Such armor as one can wear when the great day dawns, and we would appear on the Lord's side in the fight. All this has implications to the manner of life and conduct of the Christian. The works of darkness are to be cast off. We are to walk in the light as God is in the light.

3. Act honestly and becomingly as Christians (13:13-14).

There are the various acts and manifestations of excess in self-indulgence and self-will. We belong to that "DAY" which our Lord's coming will usher in. Let us do only what is fit for the light and for the day. There is emphasized the contrast between the true Christian life and that of the world.

The Christian puts on the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism was a solemn and deliberate act in which the Christian identifies himself, by faith, with Christ in His Death and Resurrection. But the Christian life is not exhausted in this act. It is the starting-point for a putting on of Christ in the ethical sense. It is a "clothing of the soul" in the moral disposition and habits of life in Christ.

Every time we perform an ethical act of this kind we put on the Lord Jesus Christ more fully. But the principle of all such acts is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. The Christian lives in Christ and "walks" in Christ. "Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" is the positive attitude of the soul, and we shall find ourselves able and willing to refuse any provision for the flesh.

CONCLUSION:

CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S ETHICS

1. Paul's ethics is an ethics of the mind.

There is no contrast or tension between mind and action. Everything depends on the renewing of the mind. In the same breath Paul speaks of presenting the body as a living sacrifice to God.

The starting point for Paul's ethics is not what man is able to offer to God, but what God does for man. Paul looks upon God as absolute LORD – absolute in what God requires and absolute in what HE gives.

2. Paul's ethics is a Social Ethics.

It does not regard the Christian as an isolated individual. The Christian is a member in a great organic whole, the body of Christ. The individual gets his task from his place in the body and

from its relation to the other members. members do not all have the same function. It is in the manifoldness of endowment and function that the organic relationship finds expression. The members are dependent on each other and can mutually help each other.

3. Paul's ethics is an Ethics of Justification.

It is one of serving. It describes the conduct of those who through faith are righteous.

Justification bars any thought of merit. Man's justification rests exclusively on the action of God.

4. Paul's ethics is a Christ-Ethics.

Christ is central in salvation and for the ethical life. The Christian life is a life and conduct in

Christ. It is an ethics of love. Love is the bond that holds together all the members in the body of Christ and makes all serve each other.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

November 15, 1969

THE RELATIONS OF THE STRONG AND THE WEAK

ROMANS 14:1-23

INTRODUCTION:

It is connected in a variety of ways with what precedes. It is pervaded by the same sense of the supreme importance of mutual love among Christians which characterizes chapters 12 and 13. It makes use of the impending Judgment to quicken the sense of personal responsibility. Paul has been warning against the indulgence of the flesh.

Now Paul speaks to those who by an inadequate appreciation of Christian liberty were practicing an "over-scrupulous asceticism". The weakness is in respect to weakness of faith. The weak man is one who does not fully appreciate what his Christianity means. He does not see that the soul which has committed itself to Christ for salvation is emancipated from all law but that which is involved in its responsibility to Christ. Hence his conscience is fettered by scruples in regard to customs dating from pre-Christian days.

The scruples in question here were connected with the use of flesh and wine, and with the religious observance of certain days. Possibly the persons indulging such scruples were Jewish Christians. They were certainly not legalists in principle, making the observance of the Jewish Law an essential condition of the Christian Salvation. The Jewish Law does not prescribe abstinence from wine or from animal food.

The influence at work in the Roman Church in producing this scrupulosity of conscience was probably of Essene origin. At Rome the scruples were only scruples. They rested on a defective apprehension of Christianity. They could be tenderly dealt with. The "weak" seemed to be Jews under Jewish influence. The "strong" were Gentiles who understood the Gospel as it was preached to the Gentiles by Paul..

DISCUSSION:

I STRONG AND WEAK BELIEVERS NEITHER TO DESPISE NOR TO JUDGE EACH OTHER (14:1-12)

1. Church's attitude to the weak (14:1-2).

"For the man who is a weak believer, welcome him into your fellowship." There was a group in the Church which, because of conscience and religious convictions, wanted to refrain from the use of certain foods and esteemed "one day better than another." This group was described by the majority as "the weak". The reason for "refraining" is not given.

"Weak" -- one who is for the time feeble, but who may become strong. In respect of faith – *Asthenounta Tae Pistei* – Weak In The Faith – in respect of his saving reliance on Christ and all that it involves. One is weak in respect of faith who does not understand that Salvation is of FAITH from first to last, and that faith is secured by its own entireness and intensity - not by a timorous scrupulosity conscience.

Proslambanesthe – Receive Ye – is often used of God's gracious acceptance of men, but also of men welcoming other men to their society and friendship. The "WEAK's" anxious mind may not be at peace. The "STRONG" is to welcome him to the Church's fellowship, and do so unreservedly – not with the purpose of judging and ruling his mind by their own.

"One man's faith permits him to believe he may eat any thing." He has confidence to eat all things. The "weak" man was too cautious. *Pistis* – Faith – to Paul was essentially an ethical principle. The man who was strong in it (faith) had moral independence, courage, and originality. Paul knew that there were Christians in Rome who abstained from the use of the flesh..

2. Paul warns both parties of temptations involved (14:3-4). Paul passes no sentence on either party. He who eats will be inclined to sneer at the scruples of the weak as mere prejudice. He who does not eat will be inclined to censoriousness. God forbids this for God has received the strong into the CHURCH.

Paul was alive to the possibility of a tyranny of the weak, and repressed it in its beginnings. It is his own LORD who is involved and concerned, to HIM we must answer.

He shall be preserved in the integrity of his Christian character. The LORD has power to keep him upright. Christian liberty, through the grace and power of Christ, will prove a triumphant moral success. In Christianity the vital thing is that one belongs to the Lord through faith. Faith is the thing that is true of all Christians, the fact that unites them all.

3. The religious observance of days (14:5-6). "One man esteems one day as better than another." This is a subdivision of the same general subject. Among those who abstained from flesh and wine – some did so always, others only on certain days. But there is no reference to the Jewish Sabbath or to the Lord's Day.

Each man should have an intelligent assurance as to his own conduct. It is by having to take the responsibility of deciding for himself, without the constraint of Law, that an intelligent Christian conscience is developed. It is the moral intelligence, or the practical reason. By means of this, enlightened by the Spirit, the Christian becomes a Law to himself.

Both parties, by the line of action they choose, have the same end in view – the interest of their Lord. "He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord." The setting of the mind upon the day implies of course some distinction between it and others.

God consecrates every meal. The thanksgiving shows that in either case the Christian is acting, and therefore that the Lord's interest is safe.

4. Each one of us belongs to Christ alone (14:7-9). Christ died and lived that He may rule over us all. The Christian's whole life does not belong to himself, but it belongs to the Lord. "No one of us liveth to himself." No Christian is his own end in life. What is always present to his mind, as the rule of his conduct, is the WILL and the INTEREST of the LORD.

The same holds of his dying. He does not choose either the time or the mode of it. He dies as the Lord wills, and even by his death glorifies God. The one truth present to Paul's mind is the all-determining significance, for Christian conduct, of the relation to Christ. This determines everything - alike in life and death. And all that is determined by it is right.

It is through Christ's Resurrection that His Lordship over the realm of death is established. So that not even in that dark world do those who are HIS cease to stand in their old relation to Him.

5. In face of our responsibility to God, how dare we judge each other (14:10-12). Judging is inconsistent with a recognition of the brotherhood of believers. Censoriousness and

contempt are never anything but SINS, not to be practiced but shunned. We shall all stand at ONE BAR. God is the universal JUDGE. When we all stand at that BAR – and it should be part of our spiritual environment always – no one will look at his brother with contempt.

The universal judgment is proved from Scripture. It describes the exaltation of Christ. All shall give praise to God. "Each of us shall give an answer in reference to judgment to God." Every word is emphatic. Each gives an account concerning himself. It is before God that all will bow. Christ will be the JUDGE.

II THE INFLUENCE WHICH OUR CONDUCT MAY HAVE ON OTHERS (14:13-23)

1. Give the consideration which is due (14:13).
God forbids the contemptuous estimate of others. It is SIN in the character of a stumbling-block to others. Paul develops his ideas quite freely from his conception of FAITH. "Never out a stumbling-block or a hindrance in the way of a brother." It is ourselves which we are to judge. Do not hinder any one.

2. Paul's own knowledge and liberty is our pattern (14:14).
"Knowledge" comes first, and freedom of "conscience" comes second. If we would walk in liberty that belongs to the Christian, we must have the knowledge of the Christian's freedom, and also the heart and conscience persuasion. In principle, Paul sides with the strong. Paul has no scruples about meats or drinks or days.

It is as a Christian, not as a libertine, that Paul has this conviction. In Christ Jesus Paul is sure that there is nothing in the world essentially unclean. All things can be consecrated and Christianized by Christian use. The Conscience cannot be commanded, it must be persuaded by the SPIRIT.

3. You must have respect for you brother's scruples (14:15).
"If your brother is being injured by what you eat, then you are no longer walking in love." You may not share his scruples, but you can respect them. Put no stumbling-block before a brother. It may express the distress with which the weak sees the strong pursue a line of conduct which his conscience cannot approve. Even to cause such pain as this is a violation of the law of Christ. He who does it has ceased to walk according to love, which is the supreme Christian rule.

To tamper with conscience is ruin. The selfish man who so uses his Christian liberty as to lead a weak brother to tamper with his conscience is art and part in that ruin.

4. Freedom of conscience is not to be exercised in a loveless fashion (14:16-17).
The good common to all Christians is the Messianic Salvation. We must always have the weaker in mind.. Use your liberty carefully.

Strife on such matters is inconsistent with Christianity. "The Kingdom" is that which comes with the Second Advent, and is the inheritance of believers. It always included the reference to the glory to be revealed.

Paul did not distinguish ethical and religious. The ethical is secured by the religious, and by it alone. The religious ought to be put in the forefront, which is a grace – not a virtue. No self-denial is too great for these spiritual blessings.

5. No one can serve Christ whose conduct exhibits indifference to righteousness (14:18-19). One may serve Christ by eating or abstaining. There can be no occasion given to anyone to blaspheme. A sound Christian character wins even the world's approval. Men despise mere religious professors. But they approve a believer who walks righteously.

The pursuit of all true Christians is peace, mutual upbuilding. When any thing is morally indifferent to me, before I act on that conviction, I must ask how such action will affect the peace of the Church, and the Christian growth of others. Study the need of others, and build up that need.

6. An abstract principle can never be the rule of Christian conduct (14:20-21). The Christian admits the principle, but he must act from love. To know that all things are clean does not settle what the Christian has to do in any given case. It does not define his duty, but only makes clear his responsibility. Acknowledging that principle, and looking with love at other Christians, and the effect of any given line of conduct on them, he has to define his duty for himself. All meat is clean, hut not all eating. SIN is involved in the case of the man who eats with offense. By his eating another is made to stumble. This warning is to the strong.

In any conduct, do not cause thy brother to have his fatal fall. Do not obstruct his Christian course by doing what might act as a snare, inducing him to act beyond his conscience. Wait for one another in spiritual life. Accommodate your walk to the weak brother.

7. The strong has the enlightened faith (14:22). This enables him to see that all things are clean. Fullest freedom must be balanced by the fullest sense of responsibility to God. Do not run risk of injuring a brother's conscience, merely for the sake of exercising in a special way the spiritual freedom which he has the happiness to possess – whether he exercises it in that way or not.

"Your personal convictions exercise as in God's presence, keeping them to yourself – striving only to know the truth and obey HIS will." The true text is: "The faith that thou hast, have thou to thyself in the sight of God." The picture is that of a man having before him a question of conscience, whose decisions in the use of his liberty are such that he does not go beyond his knowledge, and persuasion in the Lord Jesus.

8. SIN reaches every thing in our lives concerning which our conscience is not at rest (14:23). It is that in which we do not have faith to proceed, in which we cannot walk with God. "Whatever is done without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful." It is the state of conscious condemnation into which one falls who goes beyond his faith in the exercise of his liberty.

The weak Christian cannot be clear in his own mind that it is permissible to do as the strong does. It may be, he thinks one moment, and the next, it may not be. If he follows the strong and eats in this state of mind, he is condemned. The condemnation is absolute. It is not only that his own conscience pronounces clearly against him after the act, but that such action incurs the condemnation. of God. But this is inconsistent.

The moral life would become chaotic and irredeemable if conscience were always to be treated so. The man is condemned because he did not eat out of faith – *Ek Pisteous* – Of Faith. All that is not of faith is SIN. And therefore this eating, as not of faith, is sin. It is impossible to give "FAITH" here a narrower sense than Christianity

CONCLUSION:

Every thing that a Christian man does that cannot justify itself to him on the ground of his relation to Christ is SIN. All a man cannot do remembering that he is Christ's – all he cannot do with the judgment-seat and the CROSS and all their restraints and inspirations present to his mind – is SIN.

All this is addressed to Christians. There is no rule in it for judging the character or conduct of those who do not know Christ. Christ has gathered a united people which, in one accord and with one voice, praises God. The Jews may glorify God for HIS faithfulness. The Gentiles may glorify God for HIS mercy.

By:

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A PLEA FOR PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE WITH THE RELATIONS OF THE WEAK AND STRONG

ROMANS 15:1-33

INTRODUCTION:

The fourteenth chapter has a certain completeness in itself. It is manifestly the same subject which is continued in chapter 15:1-13. Paul still treats the relations of the weak and strong. He has a less precise reference to the problems of the Roman Church in chapter 15. His argument widens into a plea for patience and forbearance enforced by the example of Christ, and for the union of all Christians – Jew and Gentile, in common praise. The distinction between the weak and strong had some relation to that between Jew and Gentile. The prejudices and scruples of the weak were probably of Jewish origin.

DISCUSSION:

I OBLIGATION OF BELIEVERS TO RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER ARISES OUT OF OUR RELATION TO OTHERS IN CHRIST (15:1-6).

1. Look at them in the light of what Christ has done for them as well as for us (15:1-2).
In the light of our responsibility to the JUDGE of all, we cannot question that this is our duty. Paul classes himself with the strong, and makes the obligation his own. Paul says "Bear their infirmities: Because the restrictions and limitations laid by this charity on the liberty of the strong are a burden to them."

It is very easy for self-pleasing and mere wilfulness to shelter themselves under the disguise of Christian principle. But there is only one Christian Principle which has no qualification – love.

"Let each one of us make it a practice to please and make happy his neighbor for his good and for his true welfare." Without such qualification it is "men-pleasing" and is inconsistent with fidelity to Christ. Paul presents himself as an example of the conduct he here commends. The aim is for the benefit and advantage of our neighbor. The only good for a Christian is to be "built-up" in his Christian character.

It is those who are "spiritual" who can show love to others. Lay aside our own preferences, and please them in every way that will in the end benefit them spiritually.

2. The duty of not pleasing ourselves is enforced by the example of Christ (15:3).
"For Christ also pleased not Himself." His whole life was occupied in ministry to others. If Christ had been a self-pleaser, HE would never have given Himself up willingly – as He did, to such FATE. Paul referred Psalm 62:25. This describes the experiences of our Lord.
3. God's purpose is wider than the immediate purpose of the Apostle (15:4).
"Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction." The whole Old Testament was written to teach us, and therefore has abiding value. Paul meant to speak only of bearing the infirmities of the weak.. But with the quotation of the Psalm 69:9, there came in the idea of the Christian's sufferings generally. And it is amid them that God's purpose is to be fulfilled.

"Through the patience and comfort wrought by the Scriptures we may have our hope." Here is the Christian's hope, the hope of the glory of God. The Christian has it as he is able, through the

help of God's Word in the Scriptures, to maintain a brave and cheerful spirit amid all the sufferings and reproaches of life. This is an expansion of Paul's original idea.

4. Paul prays that the moral judgment and temper of his readers be determined by Christ Jesus (15:5-6).
HE is the GOD of patience and comfort. It expresses the rule in which there will be harmony. "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" – defines the only true God as the Father of Christ. When the Church glorifies such a GOD with one heart and one mouth it will have transcended all the troubles of Chapter 14. We are to have gracious disposition of spirit. God acts in His special graces.

In this passage of Scripture God is spoken of as the GOD of patience and comfort. It is God acting in these graces that enable the SAINTS to be "of one mind together according to Christ Jesus". When the SPIRIT freely operates among believers they think of Jesus, of His love, of His service, and what will please Him. They are conscious of their blessed place in Him.

II IT IS THIS ACCORDANT PRAISE AND GOD'S GLORY WHICH IS THE RULING IDEA (15:7-13).

1. Such praise may be possible (15:7).
"Welcome and receive to your hearts one another." It covers both parties in the church, however they are to be distinguished. If Christ received both, they are bound to receive each other. *Doxan Tou Theou* – The Glory Of God – Glorifying God is the end to be attained when all Christian in love receive each other. Christ's reception of the Jews led to God's being glorified for His faithfulness. God's reception of the Gentiles led to God's being glorified for His mercy.

In what follows we have the expansion and proof of the idea that God's glory (the glory of His faithfulness and His mercy) is the end contemplated by Christ's reception alike of Jew and Gentile. Strong and weak believers alike are here exhorted to receive one another. They are to welcome other believers into the fellowship of the Church. Also they are to exercise constant careful love to one another. All this is done with a view to the glory of God. For Christ receives us to that end.

2. The TRUTH of God was vindicated by Christ's ministry (15:8-9).
Christ was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. In exercising this ministry Christ was of course circumcised, Himself and set from His birth, in the same relation to the LAW as all who belonged to the Old Covenant. But in Christ all of God's TRUTH was fulfilled. The promises belonged to the Fathers, because they were originally made to them.

Matthew 10, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Sometimes we don't understand the Divine Sovereignty, and the revealed plan. Christ came to reveal God as He is. He came also to give His life a ransom for many. But He was first "a Minister to the circumcision". The Jewish Messiah, confirming the Divine promises of the Old Testament.

"Also in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for His uncovenanted mercy to them." God had made no commitments to the Gentiles. But upon Israel's rejection of their Messiah, God's sovereign mercy flowed to the Gentiles. All the passage concerns the place of the Gentiles in the Church. At the same time it is made clear that the Salvation they enjoy is "of the Jews". Hence the Gentiles must not be contemptuous of scruples or infirmities, especially such as rise out of any associations with the Old Covenant.

Nor should the JEWS be censorious of a Gentile liberty which has its vindication in the Grace of God. "I will praise You among the Gentiles," (Ps.18:49). Christ is assumed. to be the speaker. We may say that HE gives thanks to God among the Gentiles when the Gentiles give thanks to God through HIM. In verses 9-29 the Gentiles are named ten times – five are from the Old Testament.

3. Paul describes the Messianic Kingdom and its Davidic head (15:10-12). It is a universal Kingdom. The Nations set their hope in its KING, and therefore in the God of Salvation whose representative He is. Such a hope in God will result in the praise which glorifies HIM for His mercy. Christ gives praise unto God from among the Gentiles (Ps.18:49). "Rejoice, O Gentiles, along with His own people." It was with Jerusalem as the center. All are to praise the LORD.
4. Paul calls on the God of hope to bless those to whom it is addressed (15:13). The God who gives us the hope which we have in Christ. The joy and peace which HE imparts rests on faith. The joy and peace flow from justification and acceptance with God. The more we have of these, the more we abound in the Christian hope itself. Paul prayed for God to fill Romans with all joy and peace in believing. Christ intercedes for us.

III PAUL JUSTIFIES HIMSELF FOR WRITING TO THE ROMANS BY APPEALING TO HIS VOCATION AS AN APOSTLE (15:14-21).

1. Paul has a friendly emphasis (15:14). "Personally I am satisfied about you." Even of yourselves you are full of goodness, without any help from me. The goodness of which Paul speaks here is probably therefore not virtue in general, but the charity on which such stress is laid as the only rule of Christian conduct.

"Amplly filled with spiritual knowledge." Filled full of all knowledge – "Our Christian knowledge in its entirety." It may be intended to apologize for the unusually doctrinal character of the Epistle. In a sense therefore self-sufficient.

Paul had not been in Rome, but he kept track of believers throughout the Roman world. Paul is concerned with those inner engiftments of the Spirit which enabled them with loving hearts and discerning knowledge to look after one another's spiritual needs without any apostle's help. None of the Apostles had yet preached in Rome.

Paul brings before them that wonderful commission given him of God. Paul retraces in his mind the contents and manner of the great Epistle God has enabled him to send to them – which he is preparing to bring to a close.

2. The description applies to just parts of the letter, especially chapter 14 throughout (15:15-16). There is the same courteous tone. He does not presume to teach them what they do not know, but only to suggest to their memory what they must know already but may be overlooking. This is the real justification of his writing. The "*Kharin*" – "Grace" – is that of Apostleship. It is in the exercise of a Divine vocation, and a Divinely-bestowed competence for it, that he writes.

There is a certain emphasis on "*Ethnae*" – "Nations". And the whole sentence would be inept, as a justification for Paul writing to Rome, unless the Roman Church had been essentially Gentile. The offering which Paul conceives himself presenting to God is the Gentile Church, and the

priestly function in the exercise of which this offering is made is the preaching of the Gospel.

"I act in priestly service of the Gospel." Paul always carried about the consciousness that he was Christ's chosen vessel to the Gentiles. Paul was more than just a mere Apostle. The offering of the Gentiles at God's altar would be unacceptable unless Paul showed a priest-like fidelity in his ministry of the Gospel. As a Levitical offering was not acceptable to God unless the prescribed ceremonial was precisely observed. This clause depends on the whole conception of Paul's ministry. Look at an intelligent appreciation of the sentence.

Paul says that this great offering is acceptable to God because it is consecrated to God. Those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the result of Paul's sacred ministry of the Gospel, received the Holy Spirit. This (as distinct from the ceremonial "without spot or blemish") was the ground of their acceptance. Paul was an administrator officially employed by Christ. He was "the ministering priest of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles". The Gentiles had had nothing. And to them as having nothing, Paul's Grace-Gospel came – bestowing every thing.

3. Paul's confidence is in Christ Jesus (15:17-19).

There is no personal assumption – he claims all in his relations to God. All other boasting he declines. "I will not venture to speak of any work except what Christ has actually done through me." This is Paul's explanation. The things which Christ did work through Paul HE wrought with a view to obedience on the part of the Gentiles. This combination – Christ, working in Paul, to make the Gentiles obedient to the Gospel – is the vindication of Paul's action in writing to Rome. It is not on Paul's own impulse, but in Christ that he does it.

The Romans as Gentiles lie within the sphere in which Christ works through Paul. "*Logoh*" – "In Word" – refers to the preaching. "*Ergoh*" – "Work" – refers to all Paul had been enabled to do or suffer in his calling.

"My preaching has been accompanied with the power of signs and wonders." It may seem to mean the "power" with which they impressed the beholders. It is not merely a sight to stare at, but is suggestive of an actor and a purpose.

In the passage before us "*Dunamei*" – "the power" – The power of the Holy Ghost means the influence with which the Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of the Gospel. The result of Christ working through His Apostle is here described not in its chronology, but in its range. To Paul's mind, Jerusalem was the point of departure. Paul had preached the Gospel of Christ in the sense in which it was required of an Apostle. It was Paul's vocation to lay the foundation of a Church in the chief centers of population. And as soon as the new community was capable of self-propagation, Paul would move on.

4. Paul made it his ambition to preach the Gospel (15:20-21).

Paul had never sought to preach the Gospel where Christianity was already established. A point of honor, but not rivalry, is involved. To name the Name of the Lord is to confess HIM to be what HE is to the faith of His people.

The duty of an apostle was with the foundation, not the substructure. The same confidence in his vocation, and the same pride in limiting that vocation, and not boasting of what Christ had done through others, or intruding His operations into their sphere pervades this passage.

Paul liked to quote the Hebrew because he liked to be able to express his own opinion or practice in Scripture language. It seemed to him to get a Divine confirmation in this way. The Roman

Christians were continually on his mind.

IV PAUL EXPLAINS THE PROGRAM OF HIS FUTURE WORK (15:22-33).

1. The work had hindered Paul from visiting Rome (15:22).

Paul is at present on his way to Jerusalem with the gifts which the Gentile churches have made for the relief of the poor Christians there. Paul begs their prayers for a successful visit to Jerusalem. After the visit is over, Paul means to proceed to Spain. And on the way to Spain Paul hopes to pay his long deferred visit to Rome.

The work which detained the Apostle in the East also hindered him from visiting Rome. As a rule, it was his work which kept Paul from visiting Rome, but he may have had the desire to do so and have been prevented by some other cause. "These are times."

2. A loving expectancy (15:23-24).

"I hope to see you in passing through Rome as I go on my intended trip to Spain." The Apostolic function of laying foundations had been sufficiently discharged over the area in question. The desire dated from a good many years back.

The principle which Paul has just laid down as regulating his Apostolic work forbids him to think of Rome as a proper sphere for it. Great as is his interest in the Capital of the world, he can only pay it a passing visit on the way to another field. It has been said that Paul expected to be escorted by sea all the way to Spain by members of the Roman Church (Acts 20:35).

Paul was conscious of his course appointed by the Lord. Paul's purpose to go to Spain where Christ had not been named is reaffirmed as a fact in his Divinely-purposed course, in verse 28. But Paul wanted to be comforted with their fellowship in Rome.

3. Paul announces the purpose of his visit to Jerusalem (15:25-26).

To carry a love gift to the saints there. There is an entire break in the construction. In mind he returns from the Spanish journey, which lies in a remote and uncertain future, to the present moment. "At this moment I am on the way to Jerusalem." It is for service rendered to the poor by money he brought. He uses "the saints" to describe the Jerusalem Church. The contribution came from the Pauline churches in Europe. A similar contribution was made in Galatia. It was a spontaneous and cordial resolution. It was no assessment to raise a prescribed amount. Contributions were according to "will" and circumstances. Not all the saints in Jerusalem were poor – but many were.

4. Paul expected great spiritual results (15:27).

"They were pleased to do it, and surely they are in debt to them." If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their Jewish spiritual things, they owe it also to minister unto them in earthly matters. Paul felt bound to let this resolution affect his own conduct, even to the extent of delaying his journey westward.

Paul expected great spiritual results in the way of a better understanding between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, from this notable act of Gentile charity. So the desire to see it accomplished, and the necessity laid on him to go once more to Jerusalem. The resolve of the Gentile churches to help the poor Jewish Christians, though generous, was not unmotivated. In a sense it was the payment of a debt.

"Salvation is of the Jews." The spiritual things belonging to the Jews in which the Gentiles shared are the Gospel and all its blessings. All the gifts of Christianity are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The carnal things of the Gentiles, in which they minister to the Jews, are those which belong to the natural life of man, as a creature of flesh. The universal symbol of these is money.

5. Giving is regarded as the proper "FRUIT" which seals the reality of our confession (15:28). "This fruit" is of course the collection. It is one of the gracious results of the reception of the Gospel by the Gentiles, in which they minister to the Jews. Paul loves to conceive and speak of it spiritually rather than materially. In handing over the money to the Saints, Paul authenticates it to them as the fruit of their spiritual life which has been sown among the Gentiles.
6. Paul's desire was to impart to the Romans the Grace (15:29). He felt sure it would be satisfied to the full. When he comes he will bring blessings from Christ to which nothing will be lacking. "I shall come in the abundant blessing of the Gospel of Christ." Paul had a holy, inspired knowledge that he would get to Rome. Also Paul had the same knowledge that when he should come, it would be not on a lower plane than his full Apostolic message.
7. Paul was conscious of the uncertainties ahead of him (15:30-31). Paul appealed for the supplication of the saints. "Prayer changes things!" Many things needed to be wrought by God, if Paul's Divinely-guided journey to Jerusalem was to be successful. *Adelphoi* – Brothers – is an appeal to their Christian sympathy.

The Romans and Paul alike were servants of this LORD JESUS. And Christ's Name was a motive to the Romans to sympathize with Paul in all that he had to encounter in Christ's service. The love wrought in Christian hearts by the Spirit of God is another motive of the same kind. What Paul asks is that they should join him in striving with all their might – in wrestling as it were – against the hostile forces which would frustrate his apostolic work.. Paul felt how much it was worth to have God appealed to on his behalf.

8. The Jews were entrenched in Satanic opposition to Christ and His Gospel (15:31-32). Paul asks the Christians at Rome to pray that he may be delivered from them, and pray that his ministrations for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the Saints. Also pray that he may come to the Roman Christians in joy through the will of God.

There were Jews who had not received the Gospel. It was not the unbelieving Jews only who hated Paul. To them Paul was an apostate, who had disappointed all their hopes. There were also Christian Jews in many cases who regarded him as false to the Nation's prerogative and especially to the Law. And there was a real danger that the contribution he brought from the Gentile Churches might not be graciously accepted, even accepted at all. It might be regarded as a bribe, in return for which Paul's opposition to the Law was to be condoned, and the equal standing of his upstart churches in the Kingdom of God acknowledged.

The offering from the Gentiles was a pledge of brotherly love. But it was by no means certain that it would be taken as what it was. God alone could dispose "the saints" to it as simply as it was offered.

Paul looks forward to a time of joy and rest beyond these anxieties and dangers. This is the ultimate end to be secured by their prayers. "So that by God's will I may subsequently come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company." It depends on God whether Paul is to return or how. Paul did reach Rome, by the will of God, but hardly in the conditions anticipated here.

CONCLUSION (15:33):

May our peace-giving God be with you all! Amen - so be it." There is an appropriateness in this designation. "PEACE" is one of the ruling ideas in Paul's mind always. It needs no special explanation in a benediction. It shows how fully at peace was the Apostle's heart, and how fully in God' s will. Also, it shows Paul's overflowing love for the Saints. "God of peace" – is to he conscious of God – in peace.

By:

T. Paul Deaton

November 17, 1969

GREETINGS AND CONCLUDING WORDS

ROMANS 16:1-27

INTRODUCTION:

This closing chapter is by far the most extensive, intimate and particular of all the words of loving greeting in Paul's marvelous letters. No one can afford to miss this wonderful outpouring of the heart of our Apostle toward the saints whom he so loved – which means all the real CHURCH of God.

DISCUSSION:

I THE RECOMMENDATION OF PHOEBE TO THE CHURCH (16:1-2)

1. A certificate of church membership (16:1).

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess, of the church at Cenchreae." The recommendation is equivalent to a certificate of church membership. Paul uses it with especial frequency in this technical sense. The spiritual kinship thus asserted was a recommendation of itself. In Phoebe's case Paul could add another.

"*Diakonos*" – "Minister", "Servant" – a servant of the Church in Cenchreae. "Deaconess" is more technical than the original. "*Diakonia*" was really a function of membership in the Church. She had given herself to a life of habitual charity and hospitality. On the other hand it must be remembered that the growth of the Church, under the conditions of ancient society, soon produced "DEACONESSES" in the official sense. Phoebe may have had some recognized function assigned to her.

2. Phoebe was of the Church of Cenchreae

Paul may have met her in Corinth on her way to Rome. A suggestion is made that she was sailing from Cenchreae – though she was living there – on her way to Rome. Cenchreae was on the Saronic Gulf, nine miles east of Corinth. As the Port for Asia and the East ; many Christians would pass through it. A Christian Woman who gave herself to hospitality (12:13) might have her hands full.

3. Their Christian life was to be open for her to share in it (16:2).

"That you may receive her in the Lord with a Christian welcome." No mere reception of Phoebe in their houses satisfies this. She was no alien to be debarred from spiritual intimacy. With such kindness as it becomes Christians to show.

After the Christian welcome is assured, Paul bespeaks their help for Phoebe in whatever affair she may require it. Paul speaks indefinitely, but the language suggests that she was going to Rome on business, in which they could assist her. In complying with this request they will only be doing for Phoebe what she has done for others. Especially for Paul himself. She was a woman of good position who could render valuable services to such a community as a primitive Christian Church usually was.

Just when Phoebe helped Paul we cannot tell. Maybe (Acts 18:18). Paul's vow seems to point to a deliverance from danger or sickness in which she may have ministered unto Paul. It is assumed Phoebe was the bearer of this EPISTLE. These first two verses were meant for Rome.

II A SERIES OF GREETINGS FROM PAUL HIMSELF (16:3-16)

1. Greeting to Prisca and Aquila (16:3-4).

Only here does Paul commission the whole Church to greet individual members of it. Acts 18:1-3, They had toiled with Paul. At some time untold, they had risked their lives in such a fashion as to call forth the thanks, not only of Paul, but of all the assemblies of the Gentiles.

Paul had met them first in Corinth. Maybe converted them there. In Acts 18:18,26 and I Tim 4:19, the wife is put first, probably as the more distinguished in Christian service and Christian character. On first acquaintance they had been fellow-workers, not in Christ-Jesus, but in tent-making. They were in Paul's company in Corinth and in Ephesus, at times when he was in extreme peril. Recipients of the letter would understand.

To save Paul's life Prisca and Aquila incurred some great danger themselves. What, we cannot tell. The language implies that the incident referred to as extreme peril (Acts 18:12-19:30) had occurred long enough ago for all the Gentile Churches to be aware of it, but yet so recently that both they and the Apostle themselves retained a lively feeling of gratitude to his brave friends.

2. The Church in their house (16:5).

These words do not mean "their Christian household", nor do they imply that the whole Christian community of Rome met in the home of Aquila and Prisca. They signify the Body of Believers meeting for worship there, a body which could or would be only part of the local Christian community. There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for Christian Worship within the limits of the Roman Empire before the third century. But apartments in private houses might specially be devoted to this purpose.

After Priscilla and Aquila, not a single person is known of all those to whom Paul sends greetings (15:3-16). As fellow-workers of Paul, it is plain that they shared to a large extent his wandering life. History records that they had originally a connection with Rome (Acts 18:2). They had been with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:19; I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 4:19). They had a church in their house there. Paul joined them in a greeting to Corinth when he wrote his first Epistle to Corinthians. They were in Ephesus in 54-57 A.D, and again in 66 A.D. They should have been in Rome 58 A.D. and following. It appears that Paul had his information about the Church in Rome from Prisca and Aquila. They had a connection of old standing with the Capital. Paul's life as a missionary had brought him into contact with persons in all the great towns of the East. For one cause or another many of his acquaintances had found their way to Rome.

3. Epaenetus (16:5b).

He is described as the first fruits of Asia unto Christ. Probably converted in Paul's great three years' mission in Ephesus, the Capital of the proconsular Asia. We always treasure first converts. Now Paul knew he was at Rome, and introduced his name to multiply for himself points of contact with the Roman Church (I Cor. 16:15). He evidently had moved permanently to Rome and died there, for an inscription of an Ephesian Epaenetus was found in Rome.

4. "Much labor" -- much spiritual toil on behalf of all the Saints (16:6-11).

"Mary's labor" is made the ground of special greeting. There is something finer in Paul's appreciation of services rendered to others than if they had been rendered to himself.

"Andronicus and Junias" on some occasion had shared Paul's imprisonment. It is hardly possible that so many people in the Church addressed should be more closely connected with Paul than by the bond of nationality. But it was natural for him, in writing to a mainly Gentile Church, to

distinguish those with whom he had this point of contact. It seems that they had been prisoners of war at one time. They were well known to the Apostolic circle. They were honorably known to the Apostles. They evidently had been converted very early.

Of the twenty-two persons named in verses 16:6-15, not one can be shown to have been at Ephesus. Most are specifically Roman names. Most of them are found in sepulchral inscriptions on the Appian Way as the names of persons connected with "Caesar's household" (Phil.4:22). They were contemporary with Paul. It seems that Paul had Christian relations with all these.

"Ampliatius" – a beloved in the Lord. It is a common Roman slave name. A cemetery inscription lists him as a conspicuous name of the earliest Roman Church. He seems to have been the means of introducing Christianity to a great Roman house.

"Urbanus" -- a fellow-worker in Christ. Also a common slave name. An inscription was found with a list of imperial freedmen in 115 A.D. All Christian workers had a common helper in Urbanus.

"Stachys" – a Greek name, one dear to Paul, connected with the imperial household. Paul maintained a special love for them.

"Apelles - tried and approved in Christ. His Christian character had been tried and found proof. A true saint well known of all men.

"Household of Aristobulus" – Christians belonging to the household of Aristobulus. He was the grandson of Herod the Great. Aristobulus was educated in Rome, and probably died there. It may be that at his death his servants were transferred to the Palace. It is possible that Aristobulus was a prominent Christian.

"Herodion" – my tribal kinsman. In the household of Herod's grandson there was a Jew with a name of this type. Paul, for some cause or other, could single him out for a special greeting. Only the Christians in this household had a greeting sent to them. But there were other members of it with whom the Church had relations.

"Narcissus" – probably the notorious freedman of Claudius, who was put to death shortly after the accession of NERO. This was about three years before this Epistle was written. His slaves would probably pass into the Emperor's hands, and increase "Caesar's household" as Narcissiani.

5. Choice Christians in the Church (16:12-15).

"Tryphaena" and "Tryphosa" – sisters of the same family. "Who has worked so hard in the Lord." They are still at work, but the "much toil" belongs to some occasion in the past. They were dear to the whole church.

"Rufus" - eminent in the Lord. See Mark 15:21 for the name. If Mark wrote his Gospel at Rome, as there is ground to believe, this may be the person to whom he refers (Mark 15:21). In the Gospel "Rufus" is assumed to be well known. Here he is described as a "choice--Christian". It expresses some distinction of Rufus. He was a noble specimen of a Christian. Just where "the Mother" had mothered Paul we do not know (Mark 10:30). Let Christian Mothers find here a great field for that wonderful heart of instinctive loving care given by God to extend their care for Laborers for Christ.

"Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas" – famous freedmen in Nero's time who were

put to death by Galba. They formed a little community by themselves. This is the second of "three gatherings of saints" in Rome here mentioned. In the early days of the Church "believers" gathered in great simplicity. They sought for Christ and His Word and for real fellowship in the Spirit – the real drawing powers.

Next comes another such an assembly. "Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympus, Etc." – Philologus and Julia were probably husband and wife. The next brother and sister – these were slave names. These were connected with the early Roman Church, and were members of the imperial household. A large number of persons are included here in this assembly. Paul cared for all the churches, but he could remember each and all of the beloved individuals.

6. The Christians sealed their mutual salutations (16:16).
The simplicity and warmth of the early Christian devotion cannot be brushed aside as an "Orientalism" by the colder hearts of our day. "Behold, how these Christians love one another" was the constant remark in the early days.

When the Epistle is read in the Church the Christians are to greet each other, and seal their mutual salutations. The custom of combining greeting and kiss was oriental, and especially Jewish and in this way became Christian. The "kiss" is distinguished from an ordinary greeting of natural affection or friendship. IT belongs to God and the new society of HIS children. It is specifically Christian. If the faith of the Romans were published in all the world, the churches everywhere would have sufficient interest in them to ratify this courtesy. The roll of names is over – they were in Christ. We do not know their distant world. But we do know HIM in whom they were, and are.

III WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS (16:17-20).

1. Guard against those who create dissensions (16:17-18).
The false teachers are quite definitely described. They had not yet appeared in Rome. Paul is warning the Roman Church against the danger which he has seen in other places.

There is a very similar passage in Phil.3:18, which argues that the persons denounced are not Judaizing teachers, but antinomian reactionists. It is easier to see grounds for this opinion in Philippians. Keep your eye upon – either as an example to be followed, or as a peril to be avoided. Both the persons and their conduct are to be known.

"The divisions" - the scandals which had been occasioned in other churches, are assumed to be familiar to the Romans. It refers to conduct which would create a moral prejudice against the Gospel, and so prevent men from accepting it, than to any ordinary result of Jewish legal teaching. But if the latter caused dissension in the church, it might also give outsiders cause to blaspheme and stumble at the Gospel.

As yet the Romans were untouched by false teaching. "The teaching" refers to Christianity. Christians must not associate with those who would not serve the Lord. The sense must be partly defined as "It is not our Lord Christ that they serve." On the contrary, it is base interests of their own. It is a bitter contemptuous way of describing a self-seeking spirit, rather than an allusion to any particular cast of doctrine. It refers to the insinuating tone, the fine style, of false teachers. Pious talk. "Guileless" – is the idea. Suspecting no evil, and therefore liable to be deceived. Such evil workers do not serve the Lord, but their own belly.

2. Your obedience has come abroad to all men (16:19).
"Over you I rejoice." Paul expresses his confidence in them. At the same time he conveys his feeling of anxiety. The fundamental idea of the word is that of freedom from alien and disturbing elements. Paul wishes for the Romans "Moral Intelligence, not impaired in the least by any dealings with evil." Integrity of the moral nature is the best security. The seductive teaching is instinctively repelled.
3. Divisions in the Church are Satan's work (16:20).
The suppression of them by the God of peace is a victory over Satan. The false teachers may come and cause dissension, but it will not be long till peace is restored. This benediction suggests that some copies of the Epistle ended here, for there is another benediction at 15:33.

"God will do the bruising." This is to be held fast by our faith, despite all seeming Satanic victories. "Christ be with you. Grace has God the Father as its Source; Christ as its Bestower; the Holy Spirit as its Communicator.

IV A SERIES OF GREETINGS FROM COMPANIONS (16:21-23).

1. Timothy is now present with Paul (16:21).
In many of the Epistles Timothy's name is associated with Paul's in the opening salutation. (I and 2 Thes; 2 Cor.; Phil.; Col.; Philemon.) Perhaps when Paul began this letter Timothy was absent, but had come back in time to send his greeting at the close. Timothy was with Paul (Acts 20:4f.) when he started on the journey to Jerusalem mentioned in 15:25. None of the other names here mentioned can be identified. Timothy was Paul's true yoke-fellow. Timothy said: "I can think of no higher honor than to be counted by Paul a "fellow-worker". He was faithful from the beginning on.

"Lucius" was perhaps the Lucius of Cyrene of Acts 13:1. "Jason" was the one who had received Paul in Acts 17:5-9. "Sosipater" was the son of Pyrrhus, of Berea. Relatives of Paul, and all Jewish Christians. Remember this letter was written from Corinth at the close of Paul's THIRD Missionary Journey.

2. "Tertius" salutes them as a Christian (16:22-23).
It is not in virtue of any other relation he has to the Romans. The use of the first person is a striking indication of Paul's courtesy. To have sent the greeting in the third person would have been to treat him as a mere machine. Tertius is probably the same person who is mentioned in I Cor. 1:14; Acts 19:29, 20:4; 3 John. Gaius was Paul's host in Corinth. He made all Christians who came to Corinth welcome. Erastus was the City Treasurer, an important person in the community (I Cor. 1:26ff.). He is probably the man of Acts 19:22. He and Gaius were of boundless hospitality and means, and represented the Corinthian Church. "Quartus" was known to Paul only as a Christian.

V THE DOXOLOGY (16:24-27).

1. A Benediction (16:24).
Chapter 15 closes with such an idea. So this verse is omitted by critical editors. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." It helps to express Paul's overflowing love. Paul's letters, as a rule, terminate with a benediction. His benedictions as a rule are brief. They are closely

related to what immediately precedes.

2. Paul refers to TRUTH beyond that which the Romans already knew. (16:25). Paul says in chapter one that he longs to see them. This word takes us back to the beginning of the Epistle (1:11). Paul wished to impart to them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established. Only God is able to effect this result. The establishing is to take place in agreement with the Gospel Paul preached. When it is achieved, the Romans will be settled and confirmed in Christianity as it was understood by the Apostle.

"My Gospel." The Expression implies not only that Paul's Gospel was his own, in the sense that he was not taught it by any man, but also that it had something characteristic of himself about it. The characteristic feature was his sense of the absolute freeness of salvation (Justification by Faith, apart from works of Law). Also of its absolute universality of every one that believeth, Jew first, then the Greek.

It was in preaching of which Jesus Christ was the OBJECT that Paul declared the characteristic truths of his Gospel. This preaching, as well as the Gospel, may be said to be the rule according to which the Romanians are to be established as Christians. The Gospel Paul preaches is the Gospel in accordance with which he would have them established. It is the revelation of a mystery.

3. The MYSTERY is God's world-embracing purpose of redemption (16:26). It has been set out conspicuously in the Gospel of the Romans. One aspect of this mystery is God's world-embracing redemption. The Gospel as Paul understood it was a Gospel of Redemption. It could never have been made known except through Divine Revelation. Paul's Gospel is witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets. The mystery was made known through them. Their significance only came out to one who had the Christian key to them – the knowledge of Christ which revelation had given to Paul.

Only an express command of the Eternal God could justify the promulgation of the secret, which God had kept so long. It is to God the Glory comes, through Jesus Christ. God is the Actor - setting forth Christ as a Propitiation.

4. God is able to establish the Romans according to Paul's Gospel (16:27). This description of God suits all that has just been said about His great purpose in human history and the hiding and revealing of it in due time. It is in virtue of having this character that God is able to establish the Romans according to Paul's Gospel.

Glory is ascribed to God through Jesus Christ. Through Christ the Eternal Purpose of the world's Redemption has in God's wisdom been wrought out. Paul wishes unequivocally to ascribe the glory to God. It seems necessary to refer it to God.

CONCLUSION:

God who reigns over all has now caused this Gospel to be proclaimed among all the Gentiles, to bring about obedience to the faith. From Eternity God has, in His Eternal purpose, bound Salvation to Jesus Christ. This mystery has now been disclosed through Christ.

By:
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