

Romans

The scope or design of the apostle in writing to the Romans appears to have been, to answer the unbelieving, and to teach the believing Jew; to confirm the Christian and to convert the idolatrous Gentile; and to show the Gentile convert as equal with the Jewish, in respect of his religious condition, and his rank in the Divine favour. These several designs are brought into on view, by opposing or arguing with the infidel or unbelieving Jew, in favour of the Christian or believing Gentile. The way of a sinner's acceptance with God, or justification in his sight, merely by grace, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, without distinction of nations, is plainly stated. This doctrine is cleared from the objections raised by Judaizing Christians, who were for making terms of acceptance with God by a mixture of the law and the gospel, and for shutting out the Gentiles from any share in the blessings of salvation brought in by the Messiah. In the conclusion, holiness is further enforced by practical exhortations.

Chapter 1

Chapter Outline

The apostle's commission.	(1-7)
Prays for the saints at Rome, and expresses his desire to see them.	(8-15)
The gospel way of justification by faith, for Jews and Gentiles.	(16, 17)
The sins of the Gentiles set forth.	(18-32)

Verses 1-7

The doctrine of which the apostle Paul wrote, set forth the fulfilment of the promises by the prophets. It spoke of the Son of God, even Jesus the Saviour, the promised Messiah, who came from David as to his human nature, but was also declared to be the Son of God, by the Divine power which raised him from the dead. The Christian profession does not consist in a notional knowledge or a bare assent, much less in perverse disputings, but in obedience. And all those, and those only, are brought to obedience of the faith, who are effectually called of Jesus Christ. Here is, 1. The privilege of Christians; they are beloved of God, and are members of that body which is beloved. 2. The duty of Christians; to be holy, hereunto are they called, called to be saints. These the apostle saluted, by wishing them grace to sanctify their souls, and peace to comfort their hearts, as springing from the free mercy of God, the reconciled Father of all believers, and coming to them through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 8-15

We must show love for our friends, not only by praying for them, but by praising God for them. As in our purposes, so in our desires, we must remember to say, If the Lord will, [Jas 4:15](#). Our journeys are made prosperous or otherwise, according to the will of God. We should readily impart to others what God has trusted to us, rejoicing to make others joyful, especially taking pleasure in communing with those who believe the same things with us. If redeemed by the blood, and converted by the grace of the Lord Jesus, we are altogether his; and for his sake we are debtors to all men, to do all the good we can. Such services are our duty.

Verses 16, 17

In these verses the apostle opens the design of the whole epistle, in which he brings forward a charge of sinfulness against all flesh; declares the only method of deliverance from condemnation, by faith in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ; and then builds upon it

purity of heart, grateful obedience, and earnest desires to improve in all those Christian graces and tempers, which nothing but a lively faith in Christ can bring forth. God is a just and holy God, and we are guilty sinners. It is necessary that we have a righteousness to appear in before him: there is such a righteousness brought in by the Messiah, and made known in the gospel; a gracious method of acceptance, notwithstanding the guilt of our sins. It is the righteousness of Christ, who is God, coming from a satisfaction of infinite value. Faith is all in all, both in the beginning and progress of Christian life. It is not from faith to works, as if faith put us into a justified state, and then works kept us in it; but it is all along from faith to faith; it is faith pressing forward, and gaining the victory over unbelief.

Verses 18–25

The apostle begins to show that all mankind need the salvation of the gospel, because none could obtain the favour of God, or escape his wrath by their own works. For no man can plead that he has fulfilled all his obligations to God and to his neighbour; nor can any truly say that he has fully acted up to the light afforded him. The sinfulness of man is described as ungodliness against the laws of the first table, and unrighteousness against those of the second. The cause of that sinfulness is holding the truth in unrighteousness. All, more or less, do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be right, so that the plea of ignorance cannot be allowed from any. Our Creator's invisible power and Godhead are so clearly shown in the works he has made, that even idolaters and wicked Gentiles are left without excuse. They foolishly followed idolatry; and rational creatures changed the worship of the glorious Creator, for that of brutes, reptiles, and senseless images. They wandered from God, till all traces of true religion must have been lost, had not the revelation of the gospel prevented it. For whatever may be pretended, as to the sufficiency of man's reason to discover Divine truth and moral obligation, or to govern the practice aright, facts cannot be denied. And these plainly show that men have dishonoured God by the most absurd idolatries and superstitions; and have degraded themselves by the vilest affections and most abominable deeds.

Verses 26–32

In the horrid depravity of the heathen, the truth of our Lord's words was shown: "Light was come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for he that doeth evil hateth the light." The truth was not to their taste. And we all know how soon a man will contrive, against the strongest evidence, to reason himself out of the belief of what he dislikes. But a man cannot be brought to greater slavery than to be given up to his own lusts. As the Gentiles did not like to keep God in their knowledge, they committed crimes wholly against reason and their own welfare. The nature of man, whether pagan or Christian, is still the same; and the charges of the apostle apply more or less to the state and character of men at all times, till they are brought to full submission to the faith

of Christ, and renewed by Divine power. There never yet was a man, who had not reason to lament his strong corruptions, and his secret dislike to the will of God. Therefore this chapter is a call to self-examination, the end of which should be, a deep conviction of sin, and of the necessity of deliverance from a state of condemnation.

Chapter 2

Chapter Outline

The Jews could not be justified by the law of Moses, any more than the Gentiles by the law of nature. (1-16)

The sins of the Jews confuted all their vain confidence in their outward privileges. (17-29)

Verses 1-16

The Jews thought themselves a holy people, entitled to their privileges by right, while they were unthankful, rebellious, and unrighteous. But all who act thus, of every nation, age, and description, must be reminded that the judgment of God will be according to their real character. The case is so plain, that we may appeal to the sinner's own thoughts. In every wilful sin, there is contempt of the goodness of God. And though the branches of man's disobedience are very various, all spring from the same root. But in true repentance, there must be hatred of former sinfulness, from a change wrought in the state of the mind, which disposes it to choose the good and to refuse the evil. It shows also a sense of inward wretchedness. Such is the great change wrought in repentance, it is conversion, and is needed by every human being. The ruin of sinners is their walking after a hard and impenitent heart. Their sinful doings are expressed by the strong words, "treasuring up wrath." In the description of the just man, notice the full demand of the law. It demands that the motives shall be pure, and rejects all actions from earthly ambition or ends. In the description of the unrighteous, contention is held forth as the principle of all evil. The human will is in a state of enmity against God. Even Gentiles, who had not the written law, had that within, which directed them what to do by the light of nature. Conscience is a witness, and first or last will bear witness. As they nature. Conscience is a witness, and first or last will bear witness. As they kept or broke these natural laws and dictates, their consciences either acquitted or condemned them. Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, and more comfort to saints, than that Christ shall be the Judge. Secret services shall be rewarded, secret sins shall be then punished, and brought to light.

Verses 17-24

The apostle directs his discourse to the Jews, and shows of what sins they were guilty, notwithstanding their profession and vain pretensions. A believing, humble, thankful glorying in God, is the root and sum of all religion. But proud, vain-glorious boasting in God, and in the outward profession of his name, is the root and sum of all hypocrisy. Spir-

itual pride is the most dangerous of all kinds of pride. A great evil of the sins professors is, the dishonour done to God and religion, by their not living according to their profession. Many despise their more ignorant neighbours who rest in a dead form of godliness; yet themselves trust in a form of knowledge, equally void of life and power, while some glory in the gospel, whose unholy lives dishonour God, and cause his name to be blasphemed.

Verses 25–29

No forms, ordinances, or notions can profit, without regenerating grace, which will always lead to seeking an interest in the righteousness of God by faith. For he is no more a Christian now, than he was really a Jew of old, who is only one outwardly: neither is that baptism, which is outward in the flesh: but he is the real Christian, who is inwardly a true believer, with an obedient faith. And the true baptism is that of the heart, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost; bringing a spiritual frame of mind, and a willing following of truth in its holy ways. Let us pray that we may be made real Christians, not outwardly, but inwardly; in the heart and spirit, not in the letter; baptized, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost; and let our praise be, not of men, but of God.

Chapter 3

Chapter Outline

Objections answered.	(1–8)
All mankind are sinners.	(9–18)
Both Jews and Gentiles cannot be justified by their own deeds.	(19, 20)
It is owing to the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, yet the law is not done away.	(21–31)

Verses 1–8

The law could not save in or from sins, yet it gave the Jews advantages for obtaining salvation. Their stated ordinances, education in the knowledge of the true God and his service, and many favours shown to the children of Abraham, all were means of grace, and doubtless were made useful to the conversion of many. But especially the Scriptures were committed to them. Enjoyment of God's word and ordinances, is the chief happiness of a people. But God's promises are made only to believers; therefore the unbelief of some, or of many professors, cannot make this faithfulness of no effect. He will fulfil his promises to his people, and bring his threatened vengeance upon unbelievers. God's judging the world, should for ever silence all doubtings and reflections upon his justice. The wickedness and obstinate unbelief of the Jews, proved man's need of the righteousness of God by faith, and also his justice in punishing for sin. Let us do evil, that good may come, is oftener in the heart than in the mouth of sinners; for few thus justify themselves in their wicked ways. The believer knows that duty belongs to him, and events to God; and that he must not commit any sin, or speak one falsehood, upon the hope, or even assurance, that God may thereby glorify himself. If any speak and act thus, their condemnation is just.

Verses 9–18

Here again is shown that all mankind are under the guilt of sin, as a burden; and under the government and dominion of sin, as enslaved to it, to work wickedness. This is made plain by several passages of Scripture from the Old Testament, which describe the corrupt and depraved state of all men, till grace restrain or change them. Great as our advantages are, these texts describe multitudes who call themselves Christians. Their principles and conduct prove that there is no fear of God before their eyes. And where no fear of God is, no good is to be looked for.

Verses 19, 20

It is in vain to seek for justification by the works of the law. All must plead guilty. Guilty before God, is a dreadful word; but no man can be justified by a law which condemns him for breaking it. The corruption in our nature, will for ever stop any justification by our own works.

Verses 21–26

Must guilty man remain under wrath? Is the wound for ever incurable? No; blessed be God, there is another way laid open for us. This is the righteousness of God; righteousness of his ordaining, and providing, and accepting. It is by that faith which has Jesus Christ for its object; an anointed Saviour, so Jesus Christ signifies. Justifying faith respects Christ as a Saviour, in all his three anointed offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; trusting in him, accepting him, and cleaving to him: in all these, Jews and Gentiles are alike welcome to God through Christ. There is no difference, his righteousness is upon all that believe; not only offered to them, but put upon them as a crown, as a robe. It is free grace, mere mercy; there is nothing in us to deserve such favours. It comes freely unto us, but Christ bought it, and paid the price. And faith has special regard to the blood of Christ, as that which made the atonement. God, in all this, declares his righteousness. It is plain that he hates sin, when nothing less than the blood of Christ would satisfy for it. And it would not agree with his justice to demand the debt, when the Surety has paid it, and he has accepted that payment in full satisfaction.

Verses 27–31

God will have the great work of the justification and salvation of sinners carried on from first to last, so as to shut out boasting. Now, if we were saved by our own works, boasting would not be excluded. But the way of justification by faith for ever shuts out boasting. Yet believers are not left to be lawless; faith is a law, it is a working grace, wherever it is in truth. By faith, not in this matter an act of obedience, or a good work, but forming the relation between Christ and the sinner, which renders it proper that the believer should be pardoned and justified for the sake of the Saviour, and that the unbeliever who is not thus united or related to him, should remain under condemnation. The law is still of use to convince us of what is past, and to direct us for the future. Though we cannot be saved by it as a covenant, yet we own and submit to it, as a rule in the hand of the Mediator.

Chapter 4

Chapter Outline

- The doctrine of justification by faith is shown by the case of Abraham. (1–12)
- He received the promise through the righteousness of faith. (13–22)
- And we are justified in the same way of believing. (23–25)

Verses 1–12

To meet the views of the Jews, the apostle first refers to the example of Abraham, in whom the Jews gloried as their most renowned forefather. However exalted in various respects, he had nothing to boast in the presence of God, being saved by grace, through faith, even as others. Without noticing the years which passed before his call, and the failures at times in his obedience, and even in his faith, it was expressly stated in Scripture that “he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,” [Ge 15:6](#). From this example it is observed, that if any man could work the full measure required by the law, the reward must be reckoned as a debt, which evidently was not the case even of Abraham, seeing faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. When believers are justified by faith, “their faith being counted for righteousness,” their faith does not justify them as a part, small or great, of their righteousness; but as the appointed means of uniting them to Him who has chosen as the name whereby he shall be called, “the Lord our Righteousness.” Pardoned people are the only blessed people. It clearly appears from the Scripture, that Abraham was justified several years before his circumcision. It is, therefore, plain that this rite was not necessary in order to justification. It was a sign of the original corruption of human nature. And it was such a sign as was also an outward seal, appointed not only to confirm God's promises to him and to his seed, and their obligation to be the Lord's, but likewise to assure him of his being already a real partaker of the righteousness of faith. Thus Abraham was the spiritual forefather of all believers, who walked after the example of his obedient faith. The seal of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification, making us new creatures, is the inward evidence of the righteousness of faith.

Verses 13–22

The promise was made to Abraham long before the law. It points at Christ, and it refers to the promise, [Ge 12:3](#). In Thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. The law worketh wrath, by showing that every transgressor is exposed to the Divine displeasure. As God intended to give men a title to the promised blessings, so he appointed it to be by faith, that

it might be wholly of grace, to make it sure to all who were of the like precious faith with Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles, in all ages. The justification and salvation of sinners, the taking to himself the Gentiles who had not been a people, were a gracious calling of things which are not, as though they were; and this giving a being to things that were not, proves the almighty power of God. The nature and power of Abraham's faith are shown. He believed God's testimony, and looked for the performance of his promise, firmly hoping when the case seemed hopeless. It is weakness of faith, that makes a man lie poring on the difficulties in the way of a promise. Abraham took it not for a point that would admit of argument or debate. Unbelief is at the bottom of all our staggerings at God's promises. The strength of faith appeared in its victory over fears. God honours faith; and great faith honours God. It was imputed to him for righteousness. Faith is a grace that of all others gives glory to God. Faith clearly is the instrument by which we receive the righteousness of God, the redemption which is by Christ; and that which is the instrument whereby we take or receive it, cannot be the thing itself, nor can it be the gift thereby taken and received. Abraham's faith did not justify him by its own merit or value, but as giving him a part in Christ.

Verses 23–25

The history of Abraham, and of his justification, was recorded to teach men of after-ages; those especially to whom the gospel was then made known. It is plain, that we are not justified by the merit of our own works, but by faith in Jesus Christ and his righteousness; which is the truth urged in this and the foregoing chapter, as the great spring and foundation of all comfort. Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation by his death and passion, but the power and perfection thereof, with respect to us, depend on his resurrection. By his death he paid our debt, in his resurrection he received our acquittance, [Isa 53:8](#). When he was discharged, we, in Him and together with Him, received the discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins. This last verse is an abridgement or summary of the whole gospel.

Chapter 5

Chapter Outline

- The happy effects of justification through faith in the righteousness of Christ. (1-5)
- That we are reconciled by his blood. (6-11)
- The fall of Adam brought all mankind into sin and death. (12-14)
- The grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, has more power to bring salvation, than Adam's sin had to bring misery, (15-19)
- as grace did superabound. (20, 21)

Verses 1-5

A blessed change takes place in the sinner's state, when he becomes a true believer, whatever he has been. Being justified by faith he has peace with God. The holy, righteous God, cannot be at peace with a sinner, while under the guilt of sin. Justification takes away the guilt, and so makes way for peace. This is through our Lord Jesus Christ; through him as the great Peace-maker, the Mediator between God and man. The saints' happy state is a state of grace. Into this grace we are brought, which teaches that we were not born in this state. We could not have got into it of ourselves, but we are led into it, as pardoned offenders. Therein we stand, a posture that denotes perseverance; we stand firm and safe, upheld by the power of the enemy. And those who have hope for the glory of God hereafter, have enough to rejoice in now. Tribulation worketh patience, not in and of itself, but the powerful grace of God working in and with the tribulation. Patient sufferers have most of the Divine consolations, which abound as afflictions abound. It works needful experience of ourselves. This hope will not disappoint, because it is sealed with the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of love. It is the gracious work of the blessed Spirit to shed abroad the love of God in the hearts of all the saints. A right sense of God's love to us, will make us not ashamed, either of our hope, or of our sufferings for him.

Verses 6-11

Christ died for sinners; not only such as were useless, but such as were guilty and hateful; such that their everlasting destruction would be to the glory of God's justice. Christ died to save us, not in our sins, but from our sins; and we were yet sinners when he died for us.

Nay, the carnal mind is not only an enemy to God, but enmity itself, chap. 8:7; Col 1:21. But God designed to deliver from sin, and to work a great change. While the sinful state continues, God loathes the sinner, and the sinner loathes God, Zec 11:8. And that for such as these Christ should die, is a mystery; no other such an instance of love is known, so that it may well be the employment of eternity to adore and wonder at it. Again; what idea had the apostle when he supposed the case of some one dying for a righteous man? And yet he only put it as a thing that might be. Was it not the undergoing this suffering, that the person intended to be benefitted might be released therefrom? But from what are believers in Christ released by his death? Not from bodily death; for that they all do and must endure. The evil, from which the deliverance could be effected only in this astonishing manner, must be more dreadful than natural death. There is no evil, to which the argument can be applied, except that which the apostle actually affirms, sin, and wrath, the punishment of sin, determined by the unerring justice of God. And if, by Divine grace, they were thus brought to repent, and to believe in Christ, and thus were justified by the price of his bloodshedding, and by faith in that atonement, much more through Him who died for them and rose again, would they be kept from falling under the power of sin and Satan, or departing finally from him. The living Lord of all, will complete the purpose of his dying love, by saving all true believers to the uttermost. Having such a pledge of salvation in the love of God through Christ, the apostle declared that believers not only rejoiced in the hope of heaven, and even in their tribulations for Christ's sake, but they gloried in God also, as their unchangeable Friend and all-sufficient Portion, through Christ only.

Verses 12–14

The design of what follows is plain. It is to exalt our views respecting the blessings Christ has procured for us, by comparing them with the evil which followed upon the fall of our first father; and by showing that these blessings not only extend to the removal of these evils, but far beyond. Adam sinning, his nature became guilty and corrupted, and so came to his children. Thus in him all have sinned. And death is by sin; for death is the wages of sin. Then entered all that misery which is the due desert of sin; temporal, spiritual, eternal death. If Adam had not sinned, he had not died; but a sentence of death was passed, as upon a criminal; it passed through all men, as an infectious disease that none escape. In proof of our union with Adam, and our part in his first transgression, observe, that sin prevailed in the world, for many ages before the giving of the law by Moses. And death reigned in that long time, not only over adults who wilfully sinned, but also over multitudes of infants, which shows that they had fallen in Adam under condemnation, and that the sin of Adam extended to all his posterity. He was a figure or type of Him that was to come as Surety of a new covenant, for all who are related to Him.

Verses 15–19

Through one man's offence, all mankind are exposed to eternal condemnation. But the grace and mercy of God, and the free gift of righteousness and salvation, are through Jesus Christ, as man: yet the Lord from heaven has brought the multitude of believers into a more safe and exalted state than that from which they fell in Adam. This free gift did not place them anew in a state of trial, but fixed them in a state of justification, as Adam would have been placed, had he stood. Notwithstanding the differences, there is a striking similarity. As by the offence of one, sin and death prevailed to the condemnation of all men, so by the righteousness of one, grace prevailed to the justification of all related to Christ by faith. Through the grace of God, the gift by grace has abounded to many through Christ; yet multitudes choose to remain under the dominion of sin and death, rather than to apply for the blessings of the reign of grace. But Christ will in nowise cast out any who are willing to come to him.

Verses 20, 21

By Christ and his righteousness, we have more and greater privileges than we lost by the offence of Adam. The moral law showed that many thoughts, tempers, words, and actions, were sinful, thus transgressions were multiplied. Not making sin to abound the more, but discovering the sinfulness of it, even as the letting in a clearer light into a room, discovers the dust and filth which were there before, but were not seen. The sin of Adam, and the effect of corruption in us, are the abounding of that offence which appeared on the entrance of the law. And the terrors of the law make gospel comforts the more sweet. Thus God the Holy Spirit has, by the blessed apostle, delivered to us a most important truth, full of consolation, suited to our need as sinners. Whatever one may have above another, every man is a sinner against God, stands condemned by the law, and needs pardon. A righteousness that is to justify cannot be made up of a mixture of sin and holiness. There can be no title to an eternal reward without a pure and spotless righteousness: let us look for it, even to the righteousness of Christ.

Chapter 6

Chapter Outline

Believers must die to sin, and live to God.	(1, 2)
This is urged by their Christian baptism and union with Christ.	(3–10)
They are made alive to God.	(11–15)
And are freed from the dominion of sin.	(16–20)
The end of sin is death, and of holiness everlasting life.	(21–23)

Verses 1, 2

The apostle is very full in pressing the necessity of holiness. He does not explain away the free grace of the gospel, but he shows that connexion between justification and holiness are inseparable. Let the thought be abhorred, of continuing in sin that grace may abound. True believers are dead to sin, therefore they ought not to follow it. No man can at the same time be both dead and alive. He is a fool who, desiring to be dead unto sin, thinks he may live in it.

Verses 3–10

Baptism teaches the necessity of dying to sin, and being as it were buried from all ungodly and unholy pursuits, and of rising to walk with God in newness of life. Unholy professors may have had the outward sign of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, but they never passed from the family of Satan to that of God. The corrupt nature, called the old man, because derived from our first father Adam, is crucified with Christ, in every true believer, by the grace derived from the cross. It is weakened and in a dying state, though it yet struggles for life, and even for victory. But the whole body of sin, whatever is not according to the holy law of God, must be done away, so that the believer may no more be the slave of sin, but live to God, and find happiness in his service.

Verses 11–15

The strongest motives against sin, and to enforce holiness, are here stated. Being made free from the reign of sin, alive unto God, and having the prospect of eternal life, it becomes believers to be greatly concerned to advance thereto. But, as unholy lusts are not quite rooted out in this life, it must be the care of the Christian to resist their motions, earnestly striving, that, through Divine grace, they may not prevail in this mortal state. Let the thought that

this state will soon be at an end, encourage the true Christian, as to the motions of lusts, which so often perplex and distress him. Let us present all our powers to God, as weapons or tools ready for the warfare, and work of righteousness, in his service. There is strength in the covenant of grace for us. Sin shall not have dominion. God's promises to us are more powerful and effectual for mortifying sin, than our promises to God. Sin may struggle in a real believer, and create him a great deal of trouble, but it shall not have dominion; it may vex him, but it shall not rule over him. Shall any take occasion from this encouraging doctrine to allow themselves in the practice of any sin? Far be such abominable thoughts, so contrary to the perfections of God, and the design of his gospel, so opposed to being under grace. What can be a stronger motive against sin than the love of Christ? Shall we sin against so much goodness, and such love?

Verses 16–20

Every man is the servant of the master to whose commands he yields himself; whether it be the sinful dispositions of his heart, in actions which lead to death, or the new and spiritual obedience implanted by regeneration. The apostle rejoiced now they obeyed from the heart the gospel, into which they were delivered as into a mould. As the same metal becomes a new vessel, when melted and recast in another mould, so the believer has become a new creature. And there is great difference in the liberty of mind and spirit, so opposite to the state of slavery, which the true Christian has in the service of his rightful Lord, whom he is enabled to consider as his Father, and himself as his son and heir, by the adoption of grace. The dominion of sin consists in being willingly slaves thereto, not in being harassed by it as a hated power, struggling for victory. Those who now are the servants of God, once were the slaves of sin.

Verses 21–23

The pleasure and profit of sin do not deserve to be called fruit. Sinners are but ploughing iniquity, sowing vanity, and reaping the same. Shame came into the world with sin, and is still the certain effect of it. The end of sin is death. Though the way may seem pleasant and inviting, yet it will be bitterness in the latter end. From this condemnation the believer is set at liberty, when made free from sin. If the fruit is unto holiness, if there is an active principle of true and growing grace, the end will be everlasting life; a very happy end! Though the way is up-hill, though it is narrow, thorny, and beset, yet everlasting life at the end of it is sure. The gift of God is eternal life. And this gift is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ purchased it, prepared it, prepares us for it, preserves us to it; he is the All in all in our salvation.

Chapter 7

Chapter Outline

- Believers are united to Christ, that they
may bring forth fruit unto God. (1-6)
- The use and excellence of the law. (7-13)
- The spiritual conflicts between corrup-
tion and grace in a believer. (14-25)

Verses 1-6

So long as a man continues under the law as a covenant, and seeks justification by his own obedience, he continues the slave of sin in some form. Nothing but the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, can make any sinner free from the law of sin and death. Believers are delivered from that power of the law, which condemns for the sins committed by them. And they are delivered from that power of the law which stirs up and provokes the sin that dwells in them. Understand this not of the law as a rule, but as a covenant of works. In profession and privilege, we are under a covenant of grace, and not under a covenant of works; under the gospel of Christ, not under the law of Moses. The difference is spoken of under the similitude or figure of being married to a new husband. The second marriage is to Christ. By death we are freed from obligation to the law as a covenant, as the wife is from her vows to her husband. In our believing powerfully and effectually, we are dead to the law, and have no more to do with it than the dead servant, who is freed from his master, has to do with his master's yoke. The day of our believing, is the day of being united to the Lord Jesus. We enter upon a life of dependence on him, and duty to him. Good works are from union with Christ; as the fruitfulness of the vine is the product of its being united to its roots; there is no fruit to God, till we are united to Christ. The law, and the greatest efforts of one under the law, still in the flesh, under the power of corrupt principles, cannot set the heart right with regard to the love of God, overcome worldly lusts, or give truth and sincerity in the inward parts, or any thing that comes by the special sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Nothing more than a formal obedience to the outward letter of any precept, can be performed by us, without the renewing, new-creating grace of the new covenant.

Verses 7-13

There is no way of coming to that knowledge of sin, which is necessary to repentance, and therefore to peace and pardon, but by trying our hearts and lives by the law. In his own case the apostle would not have known the sinfulness of his thoughts, motives, and actions, but by the law. That perfect standard showed how wrong his heart and life were, proving his sins to be more numerous than he had before thought, but it did not contain any provision

of mercy or grace for his relief. He is ignorant of human nature and the perverseness of his own heart, who does not perceive in himself a readiness to fancy there is something desirable in what is out of reach. We may perceive this in our children, though self-love makes us blind to it in ourselves. The more humble and spiritual any Christian is, the more clearly will he perceive that the apostle describes the true believer, from his first convictions of sin to his greatest progress in grace, during this present imperfect state. St. Paul was once a Pharisee, ignorant of the spirituality of the law, having some correctness of character, without knowing his inward depravity. When the commandment came to his conscience by the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and he saw what it demanded, he found his sinful mind rise against it. He felt at the same time the evil of sin, his own sinful state, that he was unable to fulfil the law, and was like a criminal when condemned. But though the evil principle in the human heart produces sinful motions, and the more by taking occasion of the commandment; yet the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. It is not favourable to sin, which it pursues into the heart, and discovers and reproveth in the inward motions thereof. Nothing is so good but a corrupt and vicious nature will pervert it. The same heat that softens wax, hardens clay. Food or medicine when taken wrong, may cause death, though its nature is to nourish or to heal. The law may cause death through man's depravity, but sin is the poison that brings death. Not the law, but sin discovered by the law, was made death to the apostle. The ruinous nature of sin, and the sinfulness of the human heart, are here clearly shown.

Verses 14–17

Compared with the holy rule of conduct in the law of God, the apostle found himself so very far short of perfection, that he seemed to be carnal; like a man who is sold against his will to a hated master, from whom he cannot set himself at liberty. A real Christian unwillingly serves this hated master, yet cannot shake off the galling chain, till his powerful and gracious Friend above, rescues him. The remaining evil of his heart is a real and humbling hinderance to his serving God as angels do and the spirits of just made perfect. This strong language was the result of St. Paul's great advance in holiness, and the depth of his self-abasement and hatred of sin. If we do not understand this language, it is because we are so far beneath him in holiness, knowledge of the spirituality of God's law, and the evil of our own hearts, and hatred of moral evil. And many believers have adopted the apostle's language, showing that it is suitable to their deep feelings of abhorrence of sin, and self-abasement. The apostle enlarges on the conflict he daily maintained with the remainder of his original depravity. He was frequently led into tempers, words, or actions, which he did not approve or allow in his renewed judgement and affections. By distinguishing his real self, his spiritual part, from the self, or flesh, in which sin dwelt, and by observing that the evil actions were done, not by him, but by sin dwelling in him, the apostle did not mean that men are not accountable for their sins, but he teaches the evil of their sins, by showing that they are all

done against reason and conscience. Sin dwelling in a man, does not prove its ruling, or having dominion over him. If a man dwells in a city, or in a country, still he may not rule there.

Verses 18–22

The more pure and holy the heart is, it will have the more quick feeling as to the sin that remains in it. The believer sees more of the beauty of holiness and the excellence of the law. His earnest desires to obey, increase as he grows in grace. But the whole good on which his will is fully bent, he does not do; sin ever springing up in him, through remaining corruption, he often does evil, though against the fixed determination of his will. The motions of sin within grieved the apostle. If by the striving of the flesh against the Spirit, was meant that he could not do or perform as the Spirit suggested, so also, by the effectual opposition of the Spirit, he could not do what the flesh prompted him to do. How different this case from that of those who make themselves easy with regard to the inward motions of the flesh prompting them to evil; who, against the light and warning of conscience, go on, even in outward practice, to do evil, and thus, with forethought, go on in the road to perdition! For as the believer is under grace, and his will is for the way of holiness, he sincerely delights in the law of God, and in the holiness which it demands, according to his inward man; that new man in him, which after God is created in true holiness.

Verses 23–25

This passage does not represent the apostle as one that walked after the flesh, but as one that had it greatly at heart, not to walk so. And if there are those who abuse this passage, as they also do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction, yet serious Christians find cause to bless God for having thus provided for their support and comfort. We are not, because of the abuse of such as are blinded by their own lusts, to find fault with the scripture, or any just and well warranted interpretation of it. And no man who is not engaged in this conflict, can clearly understand the meaning of these words, or rightly judge concerning this painful conflict, which led the apostle to bemoan himself as a wretched man, constrained to what he abhorred. He could not deliver himself; and this made him the more fervently thank God for the way of salvation revealed through Jesus Christ, which promised him, in the end, deliverance from this enemy. So then, says he, I myself, with my mind, my prevailing judgement, affections, and purposes, as a regenerate man, by Divine grace, serve and obey the law of God; but with the flesh, the carnal nature, the remains of depravity, I serve the law of sin, which wars against the law of my mind. Not serving it so as to live in it, or to allow it, but as unable to free himself from it, even in his very best state, and needing to look for help and deliverance out of himself. It is evident that he thanks God for Christ, as our deliverer, as our atonement and righteousness in himself, and not because of any holiness wrought in us. He knew of no such salvation, and disowned any such title to it. He was

willing to act in all points agreeable to the law, in his mind and conscience, but was hindered by indwelling sin, and never attained the perfection the law requires. What can be deliverance for a man always sinful, but the free grace of God, as offered in Christ Jesus? The power of Divine grace, and of the Holy Spirit, could root out sin from our hearts even in this life, if Divine wisdom had not otherwise thought fit. But it is suffered, that Christians might constantly feel, and understand thoroughly, the wretched state from which Divine grace saves them; might be kept from trusting in themselves; and might ever hold all their consolation and hope, from the rich and free grace of God in Christ.

Chapter 8

Chapter Outline

The freedom of believers from condemnation.	(1–9)
Their privileges as being the children of God.	(10–17)
Their hopeful prospects under tribulations.	(18–25)
Their assistance from the Spirit in prayer.	(26, 27)
Their interest in the love of God.	(28–31)
Their final triumph, through Christ.	(32–39)

Verses 1–9

Believers may be chastened of the Lord, but will not be condemned with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are thus secured. What is the principle of their walk; the flesh or the Spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? For which of these do we make provision, by which are we governed? The unrenewed will is unable to keep any commandment fully. And the law, besides outward duties, requires inward obedience. God showed abhorrence of sin by the sufferings of his Son in the flesh, that the believer's person might be pardoned and justified. Thus satisfaction was made to Divine justice, and the way of salvation opened for the sinner. By the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us; there is that in all true believers, which answers the intention of the law. The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, the concerns of eternity, are the things of the Spirit, which those that are after the Spirit do mind. Which way do our thoughts move with most pleasure? Which way go our plans and contrivances? Are we most wise for the world, or for our souls? Those that live in pleasure are dead, [1Ti 5:6](#). A sanctified soul is a living soul; and that life is peace. The carnal mind is not only an enemy to God, but enmity itself. The carnal man may, by the power of Divine grace, be made subject to the law of God, but the carnal mind never can; that must be broken and driven out. We may know our real state and character by inquiring whether we have the Spirit of God and Christ, or not, ver. 9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Having the Spirit of Christ, means having a turn of mind in some degree like the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and is to be shown by a life and conversation suitable to his precepts and example.

Verses 10–17

If the Spirit be in us, Christ is in us. He dwells in the heart by faith. Grace in the soul is its new nature; the soul is alive to God, and has begun its holy happiness which shall endure for ever. The righteousness of Christ imputed, secures the soul, the better part, from death. From hence we see how much it is our duty to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. If any habitually live according to corrupt lustings, they will certainly perish in their sins, whatever they profess. And what can a worldly life present, worthy for a moment to be put against this noble prize of our high calling? Let us then, by the Spirit, endeavour more and more to mortify the flesh. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit brings a new and Divine life to the soul, though in a feeble state. And the sons of God have the Spirit to work in them the disposition of children; they have not the spirit of bondage, which the Old Testament church was under, through the darkness of that dispensation. The Spirit of adoption was not then plentifully poured out. Also it refers to that spirit of bondage, under which many saints were at their conversion. Many speak peace to themselves, to whom God does not speak peace. But those who are sanctified, have God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits, in and by his speaking peace to the soul. Though we may now seem to be losers for Christ, we shall not, we cannot, be losers by him in the end.

Verses 18–25

The sufferings of the saints strike no deeper than the things of time, last no longer than the present time, are light afflictions, and but for a moment. How vastly different are the sentence of the word and the sentiment of the world, concerning the sufferings of this present time! Indeed the whole creation seems to wait with earnest expectation for the period when the children of God shall be manifested in the glory prepared for them. There is an impurity, deformity, and infirmity, which has come upon the creature by the fall of man. There is an enmity of one creature to another. And they are used, or abused rather, by men as instruments of sin. Yet this deplorable state of the creation is in hope. God will deliver it from thus being held in bondage to man's depravity. The miseries of the human race, through their own and each other's wickedness, declare that the world is not always to continue as it is. Our having received the first-fruits of the Spirit, quickens our desires, encourages our hopes, and raises our expectations. Sin has been, and is, the guilty cause of all the suffering that exists in the creation of God. It has brought on the woes of earth; it has kindled the flames of hell. As to man, not a tear has been shed, not a groan has been uttered, not a pang has been felt, in body or mind, that has not come from sin. This is not all; sin is to be looked at as it affects the glory of God. Of this how fearfully regardless are the bulk of mankind! Believers have been brought into a state of safety; but their comfort consists rather in hope than in enjoyment. From this hope they cannot be turned by the vain expectation of finding satisfaction in the things of time and sense. We need patience, our way is rough and long; but He that shall come, will come, though he seems to tarry.

Verses 26, 27

Though the infirmities of Christians are many and great, so that they would be overpowered if left to themselves, yet the Holy Spirit supports them. The Spirit, as an enlightening Spirit, teaches us what to pray for; as a sanctifying Spirit, works and stirs up praying graces; as a comforting Spirit, silences our fears, and helps us over all discouragements. The Holy Spirit is the spring of all desires toward God, which are often more than words can utter. The Spirit who searches the hearts, can perceive the mind and will of the spirit, the renewed mind, and advocates his cause. The Spirit makes intercession to God, and the enemy prevails not.

Verses 28–31

That is good for the saints which does their souls good. Every providence tends to the spiritual good of those that love God; in breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to God, weaning them from the world, and fitting them for heaven. When the saints act out of character, corrections will be employed to bring them back again. And here is the order of the causes of our salvation, a golden chain, one which cannot be broken. 1. Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. All that God designed for glory and happiness as the end, he decreed to grace and holiness as the way. The whole human race deserved destruction; but for reasons not perfectly known to us, God determined to recover some by regeneration and the power of his grace. He predestinated, or before decreed, that they should be conformed to the image of his Son. In this life they are in part renewed, and walk in his steps. 2. Whom he did predestinate, them he also called. It is an effectual call, from self and earth to God, and Christ, and heaven, as our end; from sin and vanity to grace and holiness, as our way. This is the gospel call. The love of God, ruling in the hearts of those who once were enemies to him, proves that they have been called according to his purpose. 3. Whom he called, them he also justified. None are thus justified but those that are effectually called. Those who stand out against the gospel call, abide under guilt and wrath. 4. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. The power of corruption being broken in effectual calling, and the guilt of sin removed in justification, nothing can come between that soul and glory. This encourages our faith and hope; for, as for God, his way, his work, is perfect. The apostle speaks as one amazed, and swallowed up in admiration, wondering at the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The more we know of other things, the less we wonder; but the further we are led into gospel mysteries, the more we are affected by them. While God is for us, and we keep in his love, we may with holy boldness defy all the powers of darkness.

Verses 32–39

All things whatever, in heaven and earth, are not so great a display of God's free love, as the gift of his coequal Son to be the atonement on the cross for the sin of man; and all the rest follows upon union with him, and interest in him. All things, all which can be the causes or means of any real good to the faithful Christian. He that has prepared a crown and a kingdom for us, will give us what we need in the way to it. Men may justify themselves, though the accusations are in full force against them; but if God justifies, that answers all. By Christ we are thus secured. By the merit of his death he paid our debt. Yea, rather that is risen again. This is convincing evidence that Divine justice was satisfied. We have such a Friend at the right hand of God; all power is given to him. He is there, making intercession. Believer! does your soul say within you, Oh that he were mine! and oh that I were his; that I could please him and live to him! Then do not toss your spirit and perplex your thoughts in fruitless, endless doubtings, but as you are convinced of ungodliness, believe on Him who justifies the ungodly. You are condemned, yet Christ is dead and risen. Flee to Him as such. God having manifested his love in giving his own Son for us, can we think that any thing should turn aside or do away that love? Troubles neither cause nor show any abatement of his love. Whatever believers may be separated from, enough remains. None can take Christ from the believer: none can take the believer from Him; and that is enough. All other hazards signify nothing. Alas, poor sinners! though you abound with the possessions of this world, what vain things are they! Can you say of any of them, Who shall separate us? You may be removed from pleasant dwellings, and friends, and estates. You may even live to see and seek your parting. At last you must part, for you must die. Then farewell, all this world accounts most valuable. And what hast thou left, poor soul, who hast not Christ, but that which thou wouldest gladly part with, and canst not; the condemning guilt of all thy sins! But the soul that is in Christ, when other things are pulled away, cleaves to Christ, and these separations pain him not. Yea, when death comes, that breaks all other unions, even that of the soul and body, it carries the believer's soul into the nearest union with its beloved Lord Jesus, and the full enjoyment of him for ever.

Chapter 9

Chapter Outline

- The apostle's concern that his countrymen were strangers to the gospel. (1-5)
- The promises are made good to the spiritual seed of Abraham. (6-13)
- Answers to objections against God's sovereign conduct, in exercising mercy and justice. (14-24)
- This sovereignty is in God's dealing both with Jews and Gentiles. (25-29)
- The falling short of the Jews is owing to their seeking justification, not by faith, but by the works of the law. (30-33)

Verses 1-5

Being about to discuss the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and to show that the whole agrees with the sovereign electing love of God, the apostle expresses strongly his affection for his people. He solemnly appeals to Christ; and his conscience, enlightened and directed by the Holy Spirit, bore witness to his sincerity. He would submit to be treated as "accursed," to be disgraced, crucified; and even for a time be in the deepest horror and distress; if he could rescue his nation from the destruction about to come upon them for their obstinate unbelief. To be insensible to the eternal condition of our fellow-creatures, is contrary both to the love required by the law, and the mercy of the gospel. They had long been professed worshippers of Jehovah. The law, and the national covenant which was grounded thereon, belonged to them. The temple worship was typical of salvation by the Messiah, and the means of communion with God. All the promises concerning Christ and his salvation were given to them. He is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever.

Verses 6-13

The rejection of the Jews by the gospel dispensation, did not break God's promise to the patriarchs. The promises and threatenings shall be fulfilled. Grace does not run in the blood; nor are saving benefits always found with outward church privileges. Not only some of Abraham's seed were chosen, and others not, but God therein wrought according to the counsel of his own will. God foresaw both Esau and Jacob as born in sin, by nature children

of wrath even as others. If left to themselves they would have continued in sin through life; but for wise and holy reasons, not made known to us, he purposed to change Jacob's heart, and to leave Esau to his perverseness. This instance of Esau and Jacob throws light upon the Divine conduct to the fallen race of man. The whole Scripture shows the difference between the professed Christian and the real believer. Outward privileges are bestowed on many who are not the children of God. There is, however, full encouragement to diligent use of the means of grace which God has appointed.

Verses 14–24

Whatever God does, must be just. Wherein the holy, happy people of God differ from others, God's grace alone makes them differ. In this preventing, effectual, distinguishing grace, he acts as a benefactor, whose grace is his own. None have deserved it; so that those who are saved, must thank God only; and those who perish, must blame themselves only, [Hos 13:9](#). God is bound no further than he has been pleased to bind himself by his own covenant and promise, which is his revealed will. And this is, that he will receive, and not cast out, those that come to Christ; but the drawing of souls in order to that coming, is an anticipating, distinguishing favour to whom he will. Why does he yet find fault? This is not an objection to be made by the creature against his Creator, by man against God. The truth, as it is in Jesus, abases man as nothing, as less than nothing, and advances God as sovereign Lord of all. Who art thou that art so foolish, so feeble, so unable to judge the Divine counsels? It becomes us to submit to him, not to reply against him. Would not men allow the infinite God the same sovereign right to manage the affairs of the creation, as the potter exercises in disposing of his clay, when of the same lump he makes one vessel to a more honourable, and one to a meaner use? God could do no wrong, however it might appear to men. God will make it appear that he hates sin. Also, he formed vessels filled with mercy. Sanctification is the preparation of the soul for glory. This is God's work. Sinners fit themselves for hell, but it is God who prepares saints for heaven; and all whom God designs for heaven hereafter, he fits for heaven now. Would we know who these vessels of mercy are? Those whom God has called; and these not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles. Surely there can be no unrighteousness in any of these Divine dispensations. Nor in God's exercising long-suffering, patience, and forbearance towards sinners under increasing guilt, before he brings utter destruction upon them. The fault is in the hardened sinner himself. As to all who love and fear God, however such truths appear beyond their reason to fathom, yet they should keep silence before him. It is the Lord alone who made us to differ; we should adore his pardoning mercy and new-creating grace, and give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

Verses 25–29

The rejecting of the Jews, and the taking in the Gentiles, were foretold in the Old Testament. It tends very much to the clearing of a truth, to observe how the Scripture is fulfilled

in it. It is a wonder of Divine power and mercy that there are any saved: for even those left to be a seed, if God had dealt with them according to their sins, had perished with the rest. This great truth this Scripture teaches us. Even among the vast number of professing Christians it is to be feared that only a remnant will be saved.

Verses 30–33

The Gentiles knew not their guilt and misery, therefore were not careful to procure a remedy. Yet they attained to righteousness by faith. Not by becoming proselytes to the Jewish religion, and submitting to the ceremonial law; but by embracing Christ, and believing in him, and submitting to the gospel. The Jews talked much of justification and holiness, and seemed very ambitious to be the favourites of God. They sought, but not in the right way, not in the humbling way, not in the appointed way. Not by faith, not by embracing Christ, depending upon Christ, and submitting to the gospel. They expected justification by observing the precepts and ceremonies of the law of Moses. The unbelieving Jews had a fair offer of righteousness, life, and salvation, made them upon gospel terms, which they did not like, and would not accept. Have we sought to know how we may be justified before God, seeking that blessing in the way here pointed out, by faith in Christ, as the Lord our Righteousness? Then we shall not be ashamed in that awful day, when all refuges of lies shall be swept away, and the Divine wrath shall overflow every hiding-place but that which God hath prepared in his own Son.

Chapter 10

Chapter Outline

- The apostle's earnest desire for the salvation of the Jews. (1-4)
- The difference between the righteousness of the law, and the righteousness of faith. (5-11)
- The Gentiles stand on a level with the Jews, in justification and salvation. (12-17)
- The Jews might know this from Old Testament prophecies. (18-21)

Verses 1-4

The Jews built on a false foundation, and refused to come to Christ for free salvation by faith, and numbers in every age do the same in various ways. The strictness of the law showed men their need of salvation by grace, through faith. And the ceremonies shadowed forth Christ as fulfilling the righteousness, and bearing the curse of the law. So that even under the law, all who were justified before God, obtained that blessing by faith, whereby they were made partakers of the perfect righteousness of the promised Redeemer. The law is not destroyed, nor the intention of the Lawgiver disappointed; but full satisfaction being made by the death of Christ for our breach of the law, the end is gained. That is, Christ has fulfilled the whole law, therefore whoever believeth in him, is counted just before God, as much as though he had fulfilled the whole law himself. Sinners never could go on in vain fancies of their own righteousness, if they knew the justice of God as a Governor, or his righteousness as a Saviour.

Verses 5-11

The self-condemned sinner need not perplex himself how this righteousness may be found. When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving, and feeding upon him, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, Christ offered in the word. Justification by faith in Christ is a plain doctrine. It is brought before the mind and heart of every one, thus leaving him without excuse for unbelief. If a man confessed faith in Jesus, as the Lord and Saviour of lost sinners, and really believed in his heart that God had raised him from the dead, thus showing that he had accepted the atonement, he should be saved by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him through faith. But no faith is justifying which is not powerful in sanctifying the heart, and regulating all its affections by the love of Christ. We must devote and give up to God our souls and our

bodies: our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. The believer shall never have cause to repent his confident trust in the Lord Jesus. Of such faith no sinner shall be ashamed before God; and he ought to glory in it before men.

Verses 12–17

There is not one God to the Jews, more kind, and another to the Gentiles, who is less kind; the Lord is a Father to all men. The promise is the same to all, who call on the name of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh. All believers thus call upon the Lord Jesus, and none else will do so humbly or sincerely. But how should any call on the Lord Jesus, the Divine Saviour, who had not heard of him? And what is the life of a Christian but a life of prayer? It shows that we feel our dependence on him, and are ready to give up ourselves to him, and have a believing expectation of our all from him. It was necessary that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. Somebody must show them what they are to believe. How welcome the gospel ought to be to those to whom it was preached! The gospel is given, not only to be known and believed, but to be obeyed. It is not a system of notions, but a rule of practice. The beginning, progress, and strength of faith is by hearing. But it is only hearing the word, as the word of God that will strengthen faith.

Verses 18–21

Did not the Jews know that the Gentiles were to be called in? They might have known it from Moses and Isaiah. Isaiah speaks plainly of the grace and favour of God, as going before in the receiving of the Gentiles. Was not this our own case? Did not God begin in love, and make himself known to us when we did not ask after him? The patience of God towards provoking sinners is wonderful. The time of God's patience is called a day, light as day, and fit for work and business; but limited as a day, and there is a night at the end of it. God's patience makes man's disobedience worse, and renders that the more sinful. We may wonder at the mercy of God, that his goodness is not overcome by man's badness; we may wonder at the wickedness of man, that his badness is not overcome by God's goodness. And it is a matter of joy to think that God has sent the message of grace to so many millions, by the wide spread of his gospel.

Chapter 11

Chapter Outline

- The rejection of the Jews is not universal. (1-10)
- God overruled their unbelief for making the Gentiles partakers of gospel privileges. (11-21)
- The Gentiles cautioned against pride and unbelief, The Jews shall be called as a nation, and brought into God's visible covenant again. (22-32)
- A solemn adoring of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God. (33-36)

Verses 1-10

There was a chosen remnant of believing Jews, who had righteousness and life by faith in Jesus Christ. These were kept according to the election of grace. If then this election was of grace, it could not be of works, either performed or foreseen. Every truly good disposition in a fallen creature must be the effect, therefore it cannot be the cause, of the grace of God bestowed on him. Salvation from the first to the last must be either of grace or of debt. These things are so directly contrary to each other that they cannot be blended together. God glorifies his grace by changing the hearts and tempers of the rebellious. How then should they wonder and praise him! The Jewish nation were as in a deep sleep, without knowledge of their danger, or concern about it; having no sense of their need of the Saviour, or of their being upon the borders of eternal ruin. David, having by the Spirit foretold the sufferings of Christ from his own people, the Jews, foretells the dreadful judgments of God upon them for it, [Ps 69](#). This teaches us how to understand other prayers of David against his enemies; they are prophecies of the judgments of God, not expressions of his own anger. Divine curses will work long; and we have our eyes darkened, if we are bowed down in worldly-mindedness.

Verses 11-21

The gospel is the greatest riches of every place where it is. As therefore the righteous rejection of the unbelieving Jews, was the occasion of so large a multitude of the Gentiles being reconciled to God, and at peace with him; the future receiving of the Jews into the church would be such a change, as would resemble a general resurrection of the dead in sin to a life of righteousness. Abraham was as the root of the church. The Jews continued branches of this tree till, as a nation, they rejected the Messiah; after that, their relation to

Abraham and to God was, as it were, cut off. The Gentiles were grafted into this tree in their room; being admitted into the church of God. Multitudes were made heirs of Abraham's faith, holiness and blessedness. It is the natural state of every one of us, to be wild by nature. Conversion is as the grafting in of wild branches into the good olive. The wild olive was often ingrafted into the fruitful one when it began to decay, and this not only brought forth fruit, but caused the decaying olive to revive and flourish. The Gentiles, of free grace, had been grafted in to share advantages. They ought therefore to beware of self-confidence, and every kind of pride or ambition; lest, having only a dead faith, and an empty profession, they should turn from God, and forfeit their privileges. If we stand at all, it is by faith; we are guilty and helpless in ourselves, and are to be humble, watchful, afraid of self-deception, or of being overcome by temptation. Not only are we at first justified by faith, but kept to the end in that justified state by faith only; yet, by a faith which is not alone, but which worketh by love to God and man.

Verses 22–32

Of all judgments, spiritual judgments are the sorest; of these the apostle is here speaking. The restoration of the Jews is, in the course of things, far less improbable than the call of the Gentiles to be the children of Abraham; and though others now possess these privileges, it will not hinder their being admitted again. By rejecting the gospel, and by their indignation at its being preached to the Gentiles, the Jews were become enemies to God; yet they are still to be favoured for the sake of their pious fathers. Though at present they are enemies to the gospel, for their hatred to the Gentiles; yet, when God's time is come, that will no longer exist, and God's love to their fathers will be remembered. True grace seeks not to confine God's favour. Those who find mercy themselves, should endeavour that through their mercy others also may obtain mercy. Not that the Jews will be restored to have their priesthood, and temple, and ceremonies again; an end is put to all these; but they are to be brought to believe in Christ, the true become one sheep-fold with the Gentiles, under Christ the Great Shepherd. The captivities of Israel, their dispersion, and their being shut out from the church, are emblems of the believer's corrections for doing wrong; and the continued care of the Lord towards that people, and the final mercy and blessed restoration intended for them, show the patience and love of God.

Verses 33–36

The apostle Paul knew the mysteries of the kingdom of God as well as ever any man; yet he confesses himself at a loss; and despairing to find the bottom, he humbly sits down at the brink, and adores the depth. Those who know most in this imperfect state, feel their own weakness most. There is not only depth in the Divine counsels, but riches; abundance of that which is precious and valuable. The Divine counsels are complete; they have not only depth and height, but breadth and length, [Eph 3:18](#), and that passing knowledge. There

is that vast distance and disproportion between God and man, between the Creator and the creature, which for ever shuts us from knowledge of his ways. What man shall teach God how to govern the world? The apostle adores the sovereignty of the Divine counsels. All things in heaven and earth, especially those which relate to our salvation, that belong to our peace, are all of him by way of creation, through him by way of providence, that they may be to him in their end. Of God, as the Spring and Fountain of all; through Christ, to God, as the end. These include all God's relations to his creatures; if all are of Him, and through Him, all should be to Him, and for Him. Whatever begins, let God's glory be the end: especially let us adore him when we talk of the Divine counsels and actings. The saints in heaven never dispute, but always praise.

Chapter 12

Chapter Outline

- Believers are to dedicate themselves to God. (1, 2)
- To be humble, and faithfully to use their spiritual gifts, in their respective stations. (3-8)
- Exhortations to various duties. (9-16)
- And to peaceable conduct towards all men, with forbearance and benevolence. (17-21)

Verses 1, 2

The apostle having closed the part of his epistle wherein he argues and proves various doctrines which are practically applied, here urges important duties from gospel principles. He entreated the Romans, as his brethren in Christ, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to Him. This is a powerful appeal. We receive from the Lord every day the fruits of his mercy. Let us render ourselves; all we are, all we have, all we can do: and after all, what return is it for such very rich receivings? It is acceptable to God: a reasonable service, which we are able and ready to give a reason for, and which we understand. Conversion and sanctification are the renewing of the mind; a change, not of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul. The progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more, is the carrying on this renewing work, till it is perfected in glory. The great enemy to this renewal is, conformity to this world. Take heed of forming plans for happiness, as though it lay in the things of this world, which soon pass away. Do not fall in with the customs of those who walk in the lusts of the flesh, and mind earthly things. The work of the Holy Ghost first begins in the understanding, and is carried on to the will, affections, and conversation, till there is a change of the whole man into the likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Thus, to be godly, is to give up ourselves to God.

Verses 3-8

Pride is a sin in us by nature; we need to be cautioned and armed against it. All the saints make up one body in Christ, who is the Head of the body, and the common Centre of their unity. In the spiritual body, some are fitted for and called to one sort of work; others for another sort of work. We are to do all the good we can, one to another, and for the common benefit. If we duly thought about the powers we have, and how far we fail properly to improve them, it would humble us. But as we must not be proud of our talents, so we must take heed lest, under a pretence of humility and self-denial, we are slothful in laying out ourselves for

the good of others. We must not say, I am nothing, therefore I will sit still, and do nothing; but, I am nothing in myself, and therefore I will lay out myself to the utmost, in the strength of the grace of Christ. Whatever our gifts or situations may be, let us try to employ ourselves humbly, diligently, cheerfully, and in simplicity; not seeking our own credit or profit, but the good of many, for this world and that which is to come.

Verses 9–16

The professed love of Christians to each other should be sincere, free from deceit, and unmeaning and deceitful compliments. Depending on Divine grace, they must detest and dread all evil, and love and delight in whatever is kind and useful. We must not only do that which is good, but we must cleave to it. All our duty towards one another is summed up in one word, love. This denotes the love of parents to their children; which is more tender and natural than any other; unforced, unconstrained. And love to God and man, with zeal for the gospel, will make the wise Christian diligent in all his wordly business, and in gaining superior skill. God must be served with the spirit, under the influences of the Holy Spirit. He is honoured by our hope and trust in him, especially when we rejoice in that hope. He is served, not only by working for him, but by sitting still quietly, when he calls us to suffer. Patience for God's sake, is true piety. Those that rejoice in hope, are likely to be patient in tribulation. We should not be cold in the duty of prayer, nor soon weary of it. Not only must there be kindness to friends and brethren, but Christians must not harbour anger against enemies. It is but mock love, which rests in words of kindness, while our brethren need real supplies, and it is in our power to furnish them. Be ready to entertain those who do good: as there is occasion, we must welcome strangers. Bless, and curse not. It means thorough good will; not, bless them when at prayer, and curse them at other times; but bless them always, and curse not at all. True Christian love will make us take part in the sorrows and joys of each other. Labour as much as you can to agree in the same spiritual truths; and when you come short of that, yet agree in affection. Look upon worldly pomp and dignity with holy contempt. Do not mind it; be not in love with it. Be reconciled to the place God in his providence puts you in, whatever it be. Nothing is below us, but sin. We shall never find in our hearts to condescend to others, while we indulge conceit of ourselves; therefore that must be mortified.

Verses 17–21

Since men became enemies to God, they have been very ready to be enemies one to another. And those that embrace religion, must expect to meet with enemies in a world whose smiles seldom agree with Christ's. Recompense to no man evil for evil. That is a brutish recompence, befitting only animals, which are not conscious of any being above them, or of any existence hereafter. And not only do, but study and take care to do, that which is amiable and creditable, and recommends religion to all with whom you converse.

Study the things that make for peace; if it be possible, without offending God and wounding conscience. Avenge not yourselves. This is a hard lesson to corrupt nature, therefore a remedy against it is added. Give place unto wrath. When a man's passion is up, and the stream is strong, let it pass off; lest it be made to rage the more against us. The line of our duty is clearly marked out, and if our enemies are not melted by persevering kindness, we are not to seek vengeance; they will be consumed by the fiery wrath of that God to whom vengeance belongeth. The last verse suggests what is not easily understood by the world; that in all strife and contention, those that revenge are conquered, and those that forgive are conquerors. Be not overcome of evil. Learn to defeat ill designs against you, either to change them, or to preserve your own peace. He that has this rule over his spirit, is better than the mighty. God's children may be asked whether it is not more sweet unto them than all earthly good, that God so enables them by his Spirit, thus to feel and act.

Chapter 13

Chapter Outline

- The duty of subjection to governors. (1-7)
- Exhortations to mutual love. (8-10)
- To temperance and sobriety. (11-14)

Verses 1-7

The grace of the gospel teaches us submission and quiet, where pride and the carnal mind only see causes for murmuring and discontent. Whatever the persons in authority over us themselves may be, yet the just power they have, must be submitted to and obeyed. In the general course of human affairs, rulers are not a terror to honest, quiet, and good subjects, but to evil-doers. Such is the power of sin and corruption, that many will be kept back from crimes only by the fear of punishment. Thou hast the benefit of the government, therefore do what thou canst to preserve it, and nothing to disturb it. This directs private persons to behave quietly and peaceably where God has set them, [1Ti 2:1, 2](#). Christians must not use any trick or fraud. All smuggling, dealing in contraband goods, withholding or evading duties, is rebellion against the express command of God. Thus honest neighbours are robbed, who will have to pay the more; and the crimes of smugglers, and others who join with them, are abetted. It is painful that some professors of the gospel should countenance such dishonest practices. The lesson here taught it becomes all Christians to learn and practise, that the godly in the land will always be found the quiet and the peaceable in the land, whatever others are.

Verses 8-10

Christians must avoid useless expense, and be careful not to contract any debts they have not the power to discharge. They are also to stand aloof from all venturesome speculations and rash engagements, and whatever may expose them to the danger of not rendering to all their due. Do not keep in any one's debt. Give every one his own. Do not spend that on yourselves, which you owe to others. But many who are very sensible of the trouble, think little of the sin, of being in debt. Love to others includes all the duties of the second table. The last five of the ten commandments are all summed up in this royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; with the same sincerity that thou lovest thyself, though not in the same measure and degree. He that loves his neighbour as himself, will desire the welfare of his neighbour. On this is built that golden rule, of doing as we would be done by. Love is a living, active principle of obedience to the whole law. Let us not only avoid injuries to the persons, connexions, property, and characters of men; but do no kind or degree of evil to any man, and study to be useful in every station of life.

Verses 11–14

Four things are here taught, as a Christian's directory for his day's work. When to awake; Now; and to awake out of the sleep of carnal security, sloth, and negligence; out of the sleep of spiritual death, and out of the sleep of spiritual deadness. Considering the time; a busy time; a perilous time. Also the salvation nigh at hand. Let us mind our way, and mend our pace, we are nearer our journey's end. Also to make ourselves ready. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; therefore it is time to dress ourselves. Observe what we must put off; clothes worn in the night. Cast off the sinful works of darkness. Observe what we must put on; how we should dress our souls. Put on the armour of light. A Christian must reckon himself undressed, if unarmed. The graces of the Spirit are this armour, to secure the soul from Satan's temptations, and the assaults of this present evil world. Put on Christ; that includes all. Put on righteousness of Christ, for justification. Put on the Spirit and grace of Christ, for sanctification. The Lord Jesus Christ must be put on as Lord to rule you as Jesus to save you; and in both, as Christ anointed and appointed by the Father to this ruling, saving work. And how to walk. When we are up and ready, we are not to sit still, but to appear abroad; let us walk. Christianity teaches us how to walk so as to please God, who ever sees us. Walk honestly as in the day; avoiding the works of darkness. Where there are riot and drunkenness, there usually are chambering and wantonness, and strife and envy. Solomon puts these all together, [Pr 23:29–35](#). See what provision to make. Our great care must be to provide for our souls; but must we take no care about our bodies? Yes; but two things are forbidden. Perplexing ourselves with anxious, encumbering care; and indulging ourselves in irregular desires. Natural wants are to be answered, but evil appetites must be checked and denied. To ask meat for our necessities, is our duty, we are taught to pray for daily bread; but to ask meat for our lusts, is provoking God, [Ps 78:18](#).

Chapter 14

Chapter Outline

The Jewish converts cautioned against judging, and Gentile believers against despising one the other. (1-13)

And the Gentiles exhorted to take heed of giving offence in their use of indifferent things. (14-23)

Verses 1-6

Differences of opinion prevailed even among the immediate followers of Christ and their disciples. Nor did St. Paul attempt to end them. Compelled assent to any doctrine, or conformity to outward observances without being convinced, would be hypocritical and of no avail. Attempts for producing absolute oneness of mind among Christians would be useless. Let not Christian fellowship be disturbed with strifes of words. It will be good for us to ask ourselves, when tempted to disdain and blame our brethren; Has not God owned them? and if he has, dare I disown them? Let not the Christian who uses his liberty, despise his weak brother as ignorant and superstitious. Let not the scrupulous believer find fault with his brother, for God accepted him, without regarding the distinctions of meats. We usurp the place of God, when we take upon us thus to judge the thoughts and intentions of others, which are out of our view. The case as to the observance of days was much the same. Those who knew that all these things were done away by Christ's coming, took no notice of the festivals of the Jews. But it is not enough that our consciences consent to what we do; it is necessary that it be certified from the word of God. Take heed of acting against a doubting conscience. We are all apt to make our own views the standard of truth, to deem things certain which to others appear doubtful. Thus Christians often despise or condemn each other, about doubtful matters of no moment. A thankful regard to God, the Author and Giver of all our mercies, sanctifies and sweetens them.

Verses 7-13

Though some are weak, and others are strong, yet all must agree not to live to themselves. No one who has given up his name to Christ, is allowedly a self-seeker; that is against true Christianity. The business of our lives is not to please ourselves, but to please God. That is true Christianity, which makes Christ all in all. Though Christians are of different strength, capacities, and practices in lesser things, yet they are all the Lord's; all are looking and serving, and approving themselves to Christ. He is Lord of those that are living, to rule them; of those that are dead, to revive them, and raise them up. Christians should not judge or despise

one another, because both the one and the other must shortly give an account. A believing regard to the judgment of the great day, would silence rash judgments. Let every man search his own heart and life; he that is strict in judging and humbling himself, will not be apt to judge and despise his brother. We must take heed of saying or doing things which may cause others to stumble or to fall. The one signifies a lesser, the other a greater degree of offence; that which may be an occasion of grief or of guilt to our brother.

Verses 14–18

Christ deals gently with those who have true grace, though they are weak in it. Consider the design of Christ's death: also that drawing a soul to sin, threatens the destruction of that soul. Did Christ deny himself for our brethren, so as to die for them, and shall not we deny ourselves for them, so as to keep from any indulgence? We cannot hinder ungoverned tongues from speaking evil; but we must not give them any occasion. We must deny ourselves in many cases what we may lawfully do, when our doing it may hurt our good name. Our good often comes to be evil spoken of, because we use lawful things in an uncharitable and selfish manner. As we value the reputation of the good we profess and practise, let us seek that it may not be evil-spoken of. Righteousness, peace, and joy, are words that mean a great deal. As to God, our great concern is to appear before him justified by Christ's death, sanctified by the Spirit of his grace; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness. As to our brethren, it is to live in peace, and love, and charity with them; following peace with all men. As to ourselves, it is joy in the Holy Ghost; that spiritual joy wrought by the blessed Spirit in the hearts of believers, which respects God as their reconciled Father, and heaven as their expected home. Regard to Christ in doing our duties, alone can make them acceptable. Those are most pleasing to God that are best pleased with him; and they abound most in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. They are approved by wise and good men; and the opinion of others is not to be regarded.

Verses 19–23

Many wish for peace, and talk loudly for it, who do not follow the things that make for peace. Meekness, humility, self-denial, and love, make for peace. We cannot edify one another, while quarrelling and contending. Many, for meat and drink, destroy the work of God in themselves; nothing more destroys the soul than pampering and pleasing the flesh, and fulfilling the lusts of it; so others are hurt, by wilful offence given. Lawful things may be done unlawfully, by giving offence to brethren. This takes in all indifferent things, whereby a brother is drawn into sin or trouble; or has his graces, his comforts, or his resolutions weakened. Hast thou faith? It is meant of knowledge and clearness as to our Christian liberty. Enjoy the comfort of it, but do not trouble others by a wrong use of it. Nor may we act against a doubting conscience. How excellent are the blessings of Christ's kingdom, which consists not in outward rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the

Holy Ghost! How preferable is the service of God to all other services! and in serving him we are not called to live and die to ourselves, but unto Christ, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve.

Chapter 15

Chapter Outline

Directions how to behave towards the weak.	(1-7)
All to receive one another as brethren.	(8-13)
The writing and preaching of the apostle.	(14-21)
His purposed journeys.	(22-29)
He requests their prayers.	(30-33)

Verses 1-7

Christian liberty was allowed, not for our pleasure, but for the glory of God, and the good of others. We must please our neighbour, for the good of his soul; not by serving his wicked will, and humouring him in a sinful way; if we thus seek to please men, we are not the servants of Christ. Christ's whole life was a self-denying, self-displeasing life. And he is the most advanced Christian, who is the most conformed to Christ. Considering his spotless purity and holiness, nothing could be more contrary to him, than to be made sin and a curse for us, and to have the reproaches of God fall upon him; the just for the unjust. He bore the guilt of sin, and the curse for it; we are only called to bear a little of the trouble of it. He bore the presumptuous sins of the wicked; we are called only to bear the failings of the weak. And should not we be humble, self-denying, and ready to consider one another, who are members one of another? The Scriptures are written for our use and benefit, as much as for those to whom they were first given. Those are most learned who are most mighty in the Scriptures. That comfort which springs from the word of God, is the surest and sweetest, and the greatest stay to hope. The Spirit as a Comforter, is the earnest of our inheritance. This like-mindedness must be according to the precept of Christ, according to his pattern and example. It is the gift of God; and a precious gift it is, for which we must earnestly seek unto him. Our Divine Master invites his disciples, and encourages them by showing himself as meek and lowly in spirit. The same disposition ought to mark the conduct of his servants, especially of the strong towards the weak. The great end in all our actions must be, that God may be glorified; nothing more forwards this, than the mutual love and kindness of those who profess religion. Those that agree in Christ may well agree among themselves.

Verses 8-13

Christ fulfilled the prophecies and promises relating to the Jews, and the Gentile converts could have no excuse for despising them. The Gentiles, being brought into the church, are

companions in patience and tribulation. They should praise God. Calling upon all the nations to praise the Lord, shows that they shall have knowledge of him. We shall never seek to Christ till we trust in him. And the whole plan of redemption is suited to reconcile us to one another, as well as to our gracious God, so that an abiding hope of eternal life, through the sanctifying and comforting power of the Holy Spirit, may be attained. Our own power will never reach this; therefore where this hope is, and is abounding, the blessed Spirit must have all the glory. "All joy and peace;" all sorts of true joy and peace, so as to suppress doubts and fears, through the powerful working of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 14–21

The apostle was persuaded that the Roman Christians were filled with a kind and affectionate spirit, as well as with knowledge. He had written to remind them of their duties and their dangers, because God had appointed him the minister of Christ to the Gentiles. Paul preached to them; but what made them sacrifices to God, was, their sanctification; not his work, but the work of the Holy Ghost: unholy things can never be pleasing to the holy God. The conversion of souls pertains unto God; therefore it is the matter of Paul's glorying, not the things of the flesh. But though a great preacher, he could not make one soul obedient, further than the Spirit of God accompanied his labours. He principally sought the good of those that sat in darkness. Whatever good we do, it is Christ who does it by us.

Verses 22–29

The apostle sought the things of Christ more than his own will, and would not leave his work of planting churches to go to Rome. It concerns all to do that first which is most needful. We must not take it ill if our friends prefer work which is pleasing to God, before visits and compliments, which may please us. It is justly expected from all Christians, that they should promote every good work, especially that blessed work, the conversion of souls. Christian society is a heaven upon earth, an earnest of our gathering together unto Christ at the great day. Yet it is but partial, compared with our communion with Christ; for that only will satisfy the soul. The apostle was going to Jerusalem, as the messenger of charity. God loves a cheerful giver. Every thing that passes between Christians should be a proof and instance of the union they have in Jesus Christ. The Gentiles received the gospel of salvation from the Jews; therefore were bound to minister to them in what was needed for the body. Concerning what he expected from them he speaks doubtfully; but concerning what he expected from God he speaks confidently. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. And how delightful and advantageous it is to have the gospel with the fulness of its blessings! What wonderful and happy effects does it produce, when attended with the power of the Spirit!

Verses 30–33

Let us learn to value the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous. How careful should we be, lest we forfeit our interest in the love and prayers of God's praying people! If we have experienced the Spirit's love, let us not be wanting in this office of kindness for others. Those that would prevail in prayer, must strive in prayer. Those who beg the prayers of others, must not neglect to pray for themselves. And though Christ knows our state and wants perfectly, he will know them from us. As God must be sought, for restraining the ill-will of our enemies, so also for preserving and increasing the good-will of our friends. All our joy depends upon the will of God. Let us be earnest in prayer with and for each other, that for Christ's sake, and by the love of the Holy Spirit, great blessings may come upon the souls of Christians, and the labours of ministers.

Chapter 16

Chapter Outline

- The apostle recommends Phebe to the church at Rome, and greets several friends there. (1-16)
- Cautions the church against such as made divisions. (17-20)
- Christian salutations. (21-24)
- The epistle concludes with ascribing glory to God. (25-27)

Verses 1-16

Paul recommends Phebe to the Christians at Rome. It becomes Christians to help one another in their affairs, especially strangers; we know not what help we may need ourselves. Paul asks help for one that had been helpful to many; he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Though the care of all the churches came upon him daily, yet he could remember many persons, and send salutations to each, with particular characters of them, and express concern for them. Lest any should feel themselves hurt, as if Paul had forgotten them, he sends his remembrances to the rest, as brethren and saints, though not named. He adds, in the close, a general salutation to them all, in the name of the churches of Christ.

Verses 17-20

How earnest, how endearing are these exhortations! Whatever differs from the sound doctrine of the Scriptures, opens a door to divisions and offences. If truth be forsaken, unity and peace will not last long. Many call Christ, Master and Lord, who are far from serving him. But they serve their carnal, sensual, worldly interests. They corrupt the head by deceiving the heart; perverting the judgments by winding themselves into the affections. We have great need to keep our hearts with all diligence. It has been the common policy of seducers to set upon those who are softened by convictions. A pliable temper is good when under good guidance, otherwise it may be easily led astray. Be so wise as not to be deceived, yet so simple as not to be deceivers. The blessing the apostle expects from God, is victory over Satan. This includes all designs and devices of Satan against souls, to defile, disturb, and destroy them; all his attempts to keep us from the peace of heaven here, and the possession of heaven hereafter. When Satan seems to prevail, and we are ready to give up all as lost, then will the God of peace interpose in our behalf. Hold out therefore, faith and patience, yet a little while. If the grace of Christ be with us, who can prevail against us?

Verses 21–24

The apostle adds affectionate remembrances from persons with him, known to the Roman Christians. It is a great comfort to see the holiness and usefulness of our kindred. Not many mighty, not many noble are called, but some are. It is lawful for believers to bear civil offices; and it were to be wished that all offices in Christian states, and in the church, were bestowed upon prudent and steady Christians.

Verses 25–27

That which establishes souls, is, the plain preaching of Jesus Christ. Our redemption and salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, are, without controversy, a great mystery of godliness. And yet, blessed be God, there is as much of this mystery made plain as will bring us to heaven, if we do not wilfully neglect so great salvation. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and the Sun of Righteousness is risen on the world. The Scriptures of the prophets, what they left in writing, is not only made plain in itself, but by it this mystery is made known to all nations. Christ is salvation to all nations. And the gospel is revealed, not to be talked of and disputed about, but to be submitted to. The obedience of faith is that obedience which is paid to the word of faith, and which comes by the grace of faith. All the glory that passes from fallen man to God, so as to be accepted of him, must go through the Lord Jesus, in whom alone our persons and doings are, or can be, pleasing to God. Of his righteousness we must make mention, even of his only; who, as he is the Mediator of all our prayers, so he is, and will be, to eternity, the Mediator of all our praises. Remembering that we are called to the obedience of faith, and that every degree of wisdom is from the only wise God, we should, by word and deed, render glory to him through Jesus Christ; that so the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with us for ever.