

Romans

INTRODUCTION

The epistle to the Romans is the greatest of Paul's epistles. It is the most compact system of theology in existence. Its great theme is the gospel of Christ, of which the apostle declares, in introducing this epistle, that he is not ashamed, and of which the whole epistle is a beautiful, logical and deeply spiritual unfolding.

It may also be called a treatise on the life of faith in its successive stages—as he himself expresses it, "by faith from first to last" (Romans 1:17).

ITS THEMES

It has five great themes.

1. Sin

The first is the unfolding of the doctrine of sin. In the first three chapters he turns the searchlight upon the heart of man, and draws a picture of human wickedness in both Jew and Gentile, a picture whose truthfulness is made evident by the fact that even heathen people recognize it as an accurate photograph today of their own hearts.

2. Salvation

The next theme is salvation, and he unfolds it in the third, fourth and fifth chapters in all its great principles and conditions, summing up his theme with a sublime contrast between Adam and Christ—the two great heads of humanity—and between the ruin wrought by one and the glorious redemption accomplished by the other.

3. Sanctification

His third theme is sanctification, which he presents with great fullness and variety in the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters. He shows that the principle of sanctification is death to self and sin through the cross of Christ and life through His resurrection delivering us from the bondage of the law and our struggles under its power as unfolded in the seventh chapter. He then introduces us in the beautiful eighth chapter to the liberty, power and glory into which we come through the Holy Spirit and a life of abiding communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The Coming of the Lord

Then he pauses for three chapters more and discusses the great theme of God's purpose for man as it respects the Jew and the Gentile, and the glorious plan which is to reach its fuller consummation at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Consecration

Having settled these profound questions in theology, he comes back, (chapter 12) to the practical questions of Christian life, and closes the epistle with the last great theme, namely, practical consecration and service in the power of the Spirit, and he unfolds this with reference to all the phases and relationships of our Christian life. It is indeed a sublime synopsis of the gospel in all its fullness, and stands unequalled among all the writings of the New Testament for logical clearness, profound thought, powerful argument, deep insight into the Scriptures and the human heart, comprehensive breadth of view, compactness of matter, force of statement, sublimity of conception, deep spirituality and practical application to the needs, obligations and relationships of human life. It is Paul's paragon epistle, and the Holy Spirit's most complete compendium of Christian theology.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Romans 1:1-17

He begins by calling himself “a servant of Christ Jesus” (1:1).

We need scarcely say that the word “servant” means slave. Paul loved to call himself the bondsman of Jesus Christ. He was so entirely given up to the will of his Master that he counted all his life no longer his own but the absolute property of his Master. He desired no will of his own, and lived only to please and glorify Christ.

This is a very beautiful conception of Christian life and character, and it is the foundation of all true service.

He calls himself “an apostle” of Jesus Christ (1:1). The word “apostle” means “one sent,” and in Paul’s case it doubtless means the special apostleship unto which he was called as one of the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, one of the tokens and conditions of which was, that he had seen the Lord Jesus in His risen life.

He says he had been “set apart for the gospel of God” (1:1). That is, he had been set apart to this special ministry and consecrated to it, by the separating and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Separation from sin, from the world, from self, from others, separated unto Christ and unto Christ’s work, is essential to true apostleship and service.

He tells us in this introduction, something of his friends, the Christians at Rome. We have a little picture of the church to whom he was writing, as well as of Paul.

He says they are the called of Jesus Christ: “And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (1:6). It is a great thing to be called of Jesus Christ, to have been noticed, chosen and marked out as the objects of His grace and His salvation, while others have been left in sin and blindness.

He calls them beloved of God: “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints” (1:7). This is a high and precious distinction, and it is true of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the beloved of God, and “he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6, KJV) and loved even as He.

They are “called to be saints” (Romans 1:7b). The word “saint” means sanctified, holy, consecrated, filled with the Holy Spirit, living wholly to God and pleasing Him by lives of sacred faithfulness and holy obedience. Every Christian is called to be a saint, and God has made provision for the carrying out of this high calling.

He commends them for their faith, which is spoken of throughout the whole world (1:8). This is a very high commendation, and one which all Christians might well emulate and imitate.

And finally, he speaks of them as so filled with the Holy Spirit that they could even impart to him some comfort and blessing; for there may and should be this communication between the teacher and the taught, that he “who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor” (Galatians 6:6): “I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Romans 1:11-12).

He tells us something about Christ:

He is “a descendant of David” (1:3).

He is the Son of God according to the Spirit: “who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord” (1:4).

This expression, “the Spirit of holiness” (1:4), may mean the Holy Spirit, who bore witness to Christ’s deity by the resurrection from the dead, or it may mean Christ’s own spiritual and divine nature.

He tells us that Jesus is the Author of our grace and the Object of our service: “Through him . . . we received grace and apostleship” (1:5).

Jesus is the One who calls us to His service and kingdom: “Among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (1:6).

This introduction tells us something about the gospel. Paul was “set apart for the gospel of God” (1:1b).

It is the gospel of God, that is, God’s ministry of good tidings to the world.

It is “the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures” (1:2).

It is called “the gospel of his Son”: “God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness” (1:9). It is good news of Jesus Christ. Christ is the theme of the gospel, and Christ is also the Author of it.

It is the power of God unto salvation: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (1:16).

It is a trust for all the world. It is given for all nations, and we are bound to give it to all men: “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. . . . I am obligated both to the Greeks and the non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome” (1:5, 14-15).

It is a revelation of deeper fullness of Christ, as we are able to receive it through the exercise of a higher and stronger faith: “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from the first to last [from faith to faith, KJV], just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (1:17).

This is really the keynote of this great epistle. It is an unfolding of the successive stages and degrees of faith, on the part of the believer, which introduces him to the higher experience of God’s grace and righteousness as he advances step by step from the faith that saves to the faith that sanctifies, the faith that heals, and the faith that consecrates him to a life

of holy service and fruitfulness. So may He lead us on, as He conducts us through the pages of this inspired volume of Christian theology and experience!

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

You are embarking on perhaps the greatest study of the Gospel ever presented, and it is written for our learning and ability, to extend that precious ministry of the Word. **You are asked to thoroughly grasp what A. B. Simpson wrote by looking up the accompanying Scriptures listed above.**

Paul's vision of his preaching to win the whole world was indeed a very large one, and seemed almost impossible in his day wherein modern technology was lacking. Yet, indeed we credit him with opening up the whole world to the Gospel. We assume that most people reading and studying Romans with us are born again, and it truly seems automatic that with the gift of salvation, comes the tremendous desire to win as many others as possible to this same position of grace and joy. **We ask that you speak to this from your own experience and challenge for your life. Especially consider Proverbs 29:18.**

God's righteousness is shown in the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to (or considered by God to belong to) the one who believes. **Is this imputation to sinners who truly believe fully consistent with the personal righteousness of God? As a just and righteous Judge, can He through the death of His Son justify (or declare righteous) those sinners who come to true faith in Christ?**

Rom. 2:5-16 Rom. 3:21-26 Rom. 5:10-11

Were you aware that Martin Luther's reading of Rom 1:17 had a decisive impact on his understanding of justification, and this changed his whole life?

Romans 1:18-23

Back of the rainbow is the storm cloud. The story of redemption comes out of the dark tragedy of sin.

There are two revelations in this chapter. One is "a righteousness from God is revealed . . . that is by faith from first to last" (1:17).

The other is "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men" (1:18). This is a lurid flame from heaven, like a thunderbolt out of the midnight sky, revealing in its fiery blaze a most frightful picture of ghastliness and horror. It is God's picture of sin.

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men" (1:18). This is God's standpoint against sin. It is not a matter of sentiment at all. It is not a misfortune, a disease, a peculiar development of the cranium, but it is a matter of law, right and principle.

Sin is the transgression of God's eternal law, a deviation from that which is and ever must be right and an act and state which God is bound to condemn and punish by every attribute of His being and every interest of the universe which He governs.

It is as necessary for God to hate sin as it is for Him to love righteousness. God can forgive *sins*, but He never tolerates *sin*. There is but one thing for Him to do with it and that is to destroy it.

This is a matter that is already settled, and must be forever settled, by the very nature of God. The wrath of God is already revealed from heaven, the judgment is passed, and the sinner is condemned already.

The word "wrath" expresses much more than a mere judicial sentence. It denotes the intense personal hatred of God's whole being against sin. God not only condemns it and deals with it as a Judge, but He abhors it with all His holy attributes, and must as certainly strike it wherever it comes in contact with Him, as the flame consumes the tinder, or as the lightning smites the interposing obstacle.

God can love the person of the sinner, even while He hates unutterably the sin He perceives in him. But if we are not separated from sin, we must be the objects of His eternal wrath; for evil cannot dwell in His sight, and iniquity cannot be tolerated by His holiness.

God has written on every human conscience and consciousness enough of His mighty name to make them accountable at His judgment seat, and given sufficient conception of right and wrong to make them guilty when they disobey the instincts of conscience. And they have disobeyed. The testimony of missionaries in all lands is that they have never found a human soul without some idea of worship, some conception of God and some method of propitiating the invisible powers for conscious will.

This light, while it might have been a guide to the truth, is an aggravation of their sin. How much more the clearer light and the higher truth of God's Word have been given to those who have received the divine revelation!

This was the greater sin of the Jew. This is the still higher responsibility of the Christian, and this will be the knell of uttermost despair in the prisons of the lost: “Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.”

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

The language in this portion could not be plainer—it definitely is this: When man deserts God, God deserts man. We also realize from Ecclesiastes 3:11 that God has placed eternity in everyone’s heart, and He also has placed a mysterious, compelling drive in each one to worship. Augustine said: “O Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” **Speak to the justice of God as He allowed man absolute freedom which in turn took him to the lowest depths away from God. Also, speak to Paul’s edict that “Man is without excuse” when it comes to knowing and trusting in the living God.**

Ps. 14:1-3 Acts 14:17 Rom. 1:20 Rom. 2:14-15 Heb. 11:3 Ps. 19:1-4 Ps. 33:4-9

Rom. 1:24-32

How deep and irremediable was the Fall in Eden is proved in that even the race born from the family of Noah after the flood, is found to have the poison of the serpent still in them, and to be capable of such depths of corruption that, thousands of years afterwards—in spite of Roman civilization and culture, the Apostle Paul gives a picture in Romans 1:18-32, probably quite as black as the condition of the pre-Flood days of Noah. That no civilization, and no “culture,” no moral law, no teaching, and no training removes the poison of the serpent is plainly seen, both in Paul’s description of the innate sinfulness of man as given in the earlier chapters of Romans, as well as in the 20th century record of crime and sin, which is covered over by the artificial civilization of today.

(All Things New, Jesse Penn-Lewis)

What does man give up when he fails to accept God’s plan of salvation? Who then is the great spiritual force behind such a person that has made such a decision and where will that spiritual force lead him on this earth and in the hereafter?

Ex. 10:1 2 Thess. 2:11

Explain what Paul meant in Romans 1:26a: “God gave them up to vile affection” and Romans 1:28b: “he gave them over to a reprobate mind”

Romans 2:1-29

In the former chapter we have looked at God’s picture of the sin of the Gentile world. But now the apostle turns to the circumcision, the children of light and privilege and high profession, and he charges upon their conscience the guilt of yet more aggravated sin, and finally sums up God’s great indictment against both Jew and Gentile, and pronounces the verdict of guilty upon both, and leaves them silenced and helpless under the judgment of God.

He unfolds the principle of God’s judgment respecting both Jew and Gentile.

All will be judged by the same divine tribunal, but all will not be judged by the same standard. As many as have sinned without law shall be judged without law. The heathen who have not the law of divine revelation will be judged by the law of conscience and the sense of right and wrong which God has implanted in every human breast; but this affords no hope for their ultimate salvation, for it will be found that they have not kept this law, and that they will stand convicted of their own conscience and the judgment of God, confessing, “we knew our duty, but we did it not.”

The great need of the world is not so much the knowledge of right and wrong as the power to choose to do right.

The Jew will be judged by the law and the measure of light that he has received through the Old Testament, and he, too, will be found condemned even by the verdict of his own Scriptures and conscience.

The hearers of the gospel will be judged according to the gospel, and their condemnation will be, not because they have broken the law or sinned against their own conscience, but preeminently because they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ; for “whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18b).

Next we have the character of God’s judgment.

It will be most merciful and gentle. God is long-suffering and slow to pronounce or execute judgment, and when He does it, it will be with the greatest gentleness, and with allowance for excuse or palliation. While judgment lingers now, it is the long-suffering of God that would lead us to repentance, and yet men “show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance” (Romans 2:4).

This very tenderness of God will only make His final judgment more terribly severe. The displeasure of a friend is far more serious than the capricious anger of a hasty and passionate foe. When one who has always loved us turns against

us there is little hope left, and when the Savior who died, the Father who waited long, and the Holy Spirit who pleaded for our salvation, withdraw their mercy, and hand us over to judgment, then, indeed, will begin the long night of everlasting despair.

God's judgment is just:

God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first to the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism. (2:6-11)

In that judgment all will be inexorably dealt with according to their actual deserving. Every secret thing will be brought to light: every motive, thought and feeling, every consequence and issue of our acts and lives.

Every allowance will be made, but every aggravation will be weighed, and the judgment will be impartial, strict and irreversible.

If we take the place of condemned sinners, and throw ourselves on the mercy of God, He has made provision through the gospel of Christ for the exercise of His mercy in the most glorious and generous manner. But in order to receive it, we must lie at the feet of Christ in utter helplessness and self-condemnation.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Paul said the following complimentary things about his Jewish listeners in chapter 2:

You are called a Jew and rest on the Law.

You make your boast in God and know His will.

You approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the Law.

You are confident that you are a guide to the blind, and a light to those who are in darkness.

You are an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes.

You have the form of knowledge and truth in the Law.

Please list below all the ways Paul then questioned them.

Following your lists requested above Paul tells them, "that all the good things God had done for you as a nation were not to make you feel important, but to lead you to _____."

Romans 3:1-8

The Jewish people had a great treasure entrusted to them for the benefit of the whole world. This position as stewards for mankind conferred upon them very special privileges, but also exposed them to searching discipline if they should prove faithless. Some of these advantages are enumerated in 9:4, 5. But our failures cannot cancel God's faithfulness to his covenant promises, 2 Tim. 2:13. We may always reckon confidently upon his steadfastness to his commitments, whether to the individual or to the nation. It is wonderful, v. 5, how human sin has been a path for God's glory, eliciting qualities in his love which otherwise had been unknown; but this cannot excuse our sinfulness.

If this excuse were admitted, God would clearly have been unjust in punishing sin as he has done; and if that line of argument were maintained, it would be right to do evil, if good were always the outcome. Such an admission would open the door to all kinds of abomination, and the mere suggestion of such a conclusion to his argument ought to silence the objector and cover him with shame.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

After hearing Paul's strong message on all needing salvation, his Jewish listeners questioned as to what advantage, then, did the Jew have. Paul anticipated their questioning, and assured them that they had great advantages over the Gentiles—for the Jews were given the oracles (sayings) of God. God said it all to the Jew, and committed His Word to them once and for all. No one else had it. Consequently, the Jews knew who God was and what He was like. They also knew how to approach Him by faith. The Gentiles did not. The Jews knew their own future and destiny as well as the plan of the ages. There were more Jewish privileges that Paul would list at the beginning of chapter 9 of Romans, but these were enough for the Jews to be faithful to God!

The unfaithfulness of some of the Jews, caused them to ask (v. 3): "Will their (our) unbelief make the faithfulness of God of none effect?" Paul's answer was dramatic: "Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true and every man a liar! It is apparent that the Jews were looking for an excuse for their unfaithfulness, and now began to think that their unrighteousness would make God's righteousness appear that much better!

State in his own words Paul's strong "overthrow" of their self-appeasing attitude in order to avoid judgment. Also, was he persuasive in showing these Jews that they indeed were in the same category as all other people, and were nothing less than sinners?

Romans 3:9-20

The apostle sums up the charges against both the Jew and the Gentile, and brings the testimony of God's Word out of their own Scriptures, to confirm the verdict.

In 3:10-17 he especially quotes the 14th and 53rd Psalms as God's fearful charge against the wickedness of men. This passage contains a fourfold classification of man's sin. First, negatively, the things that are lacking; second, positively, the sins of the heart; third, the sins of the tongue; and, fourth, the sins of the life.

Under these four categories the world has been found utterly and irretrievably guilty and lost. Every way you look at man, he is fallen and under the judgment of God.

In the New Testament, the words used to denote sin are very varied and suggestive. The most common of these terms means "to miss the mark." Another very common expression means to overstep the mark; a third, to fall when we should have stood; a fourth, to be ignorant when we should have known; a fifth, to diminish what should have been rendered in full measure; a sixth, to disobey a voice; and a seventh, to disregard the law, and to be willfully careless.

In every way that God can look at man, he is wrong and ruined, and the whole race lies condemned at the footstool of judgment.

Finally, man is not only condemned, but utterly helpless ever to justify himself, or rise again into the favor of God: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (3:20).

Not only are we lost, but we can do nothing to save ourselves, and we are left absolutely at the mercy of God. God is very merciful in thus destroying our last hope of self-justification; just as the prisoner at the bar, if he cannot disprove the charges against him, is far wiser to plead guilty and throw himself on the mercy of the court. Now, this is the only way that God can ever interpose for the sinner. We have no rights by law, and if we claim any, we shall lose everything.

Now, this is the position that God wants to bring us to, where we shall cease our struggles and our attempts at self-defense or self-improvement, and throw ourselves helplessly upon the mercy of God. This is the sinner's only hope, and when he thus lies at the feet of mercy, Jesus is ready to lift him up and give him that free salvation which is waiting for all who are helpless enough to be willing to receive it.

This, too, is the greatest need of the Christian seeking a deeper and higher life, to come to a full realization of his nothingness and helplessness, and to lie down, stripped and stunned, at the feet of Jesus, as the apostle does in the seventh chapter: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (7:24). Then shall he be able to answer in the joyful cry of the next verse, "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:25a). And the Savior's sanctifying power will come in all the fullness of the blessed chapter that follows.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Why is it that man, by himself alone, cannot approach God for his salvation?

Ps. 1:4-6 Ps. 5:4-6 Ps. 13:1-3 Eccl. 7:20 Isa. 59:1-14 Isa. 64:6-7

Romans 3:21-31

Christ is the righteous Redeemer of His people because their righteousness is *in Him*. He wrought out a perfect righteousness for them. Upon their believing in Him, it is imputed or reckoned to their account; therefore He is designated "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:6). Christ was righteous not as a private person, not for Himself alone, but for us sinners and our salvation. He acted as God's righteous Servant and as His people's righteous sponsor. He lived and died that all the infinite merits of His obedience might be made over to them. In justifying His sinful people God neither disregarded nor dishonored His law; instead He "established" it (Romans 3:31). The Redeemer was "made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Its strictness was not relaxed, nor was one iota of its requirements abated in connection with Him. Christ rendered to the Law a personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; therefore He did "magnify the law, and make it honorable" (Isaiah 42:21). Consequently, God is not only gracious but "just" at the very moment He is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26) because Jesus satisfied every requirement of righteousness on behalf of all who trust in Him.

In the righteous Redeemer we find the answer to the question, "How can those who have no righteousness of their own and who are utterly unable to procure any, become righteous before God?" How can man, who is a mass of corruption, draw nigh unto the ineffably Holy One and look up into His face in peace? He can do so by coming to God as unrighteous, acknowledging his inability to remove unrighteousness and offering nothing to palliate Him. Because we

were unable to reach up to the holy requirements or righteousness of the Law, God brought His righteousness down to us: "I bring near my righteousness" (Isaiah 46:13). That righteousness was brought near to sinners when the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men; it is brought near to us in the Gospel, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17). This righteousness God imputes to all who believe and then deals with them.

"For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be [not put into a capacity of acquiring a righteousness of our own, but] made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Here is the double imputation of our sins to Christ and of His righteousness to us. We are not said to be made righteous, but "righteousness" itself; and not righteousness only, but "the righteousness of God," the utmost that language can reach. In the same manner that Christ was made "sin," we are made "righteousness." Christ did not know actual sin, but in His mediatorial interposition on our behalf, He was dealt with as a guilty person. Likewise we are destitute of all legal righteousness; yet upon receiving Christ, we are viewed by the divine majesty as righteous creatures. Both were by imputation: an amazing exchange! So as to exclude the idea that any inherent righteousness is involved, it is said, "We [are] made the righteousness of God in him." As the sin imputed to Christ is inherent in us, so the righteousness by which we are justified is inherent in Him.

The divine plan of redemption fully satisfies the claims of the Law. There was nothing in all its sacred injunctions which Christ did not perform, nothing in its awful threatenings which He did not sustain. He fulfilled all its precepts by an unspotted purity of heart and a perfect integrity of life. He exhausted the whole curse when He hung on the cross, abandoned by God, for the sins of His people. His obedience conferred higher honor upon the Law than it could possibly have received from an uninterrupted compliance by Adam and his posterity. The perfections of God, which were dishonored by our rebellion, are glorified in our redemption. In redemption God appears inflexibly just in exacting vengeance and inconceivably rich in showing mercy. "The sword of justice and the sceptre of grace has each its due exercise, each its full expression" (James Hervey). The interests of holiness are also secured, for where redemption is received by faith it kindles in the heart an intense hatred of sin and the deepest love and gratitude to God.

(Gleanings In the Godhead, A. W. Pink)

We are so accustomed to think of redemption as an expedient for the relief of man that we quite forget its greater and diviner aspect as the revelation of the righteousness of God.

The purpose of Christ's work was not merely to relieve man from a dangerous situation, but much more to reveal God in the highest attitude and aspect of justice, wisdom and love, not only for His own glory, but also for the highest dignity and security of redeemed man. God has made the plan of salvation more a matter of justice and righteousness than even grace and mercy, so that all through this Epistle to the Romans, the term "righteousness" predominates in describing the plan of salvation.

This is the difference between Christianity and all human religions. They try to bring God down to the level of man's sinfulness, and adjust the moral scale to the low standard of man's actual condition.

God's plan of salvation is the opposite of this and aims to bring man's condition up to the level of divine law. Not one principle of justice is compromised, not one jot or tittle of the law is modified or evaded. Every requirement of justice is met, and when man is saved, he is enabled to stand without a blush of shame, and claim his acquittal from the very decree of eternal justice, as much as from the gentle bosom of forgiving mercy.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

How did God accept man as an unrighteous creature before Christ came?

Rom. 3:25b Rev. 13:8

How does Christ justify sinful man before God and declare him righteous while at the same time preserving the righteousness of God the Father. Use the word propitiation in your explanation.

Rom. 3:22 1 John 2:2 1 John 4:10 2 Cor. 5:21 Heb. 9:11-15 Rom. 8:1 Ps. 32:1 Num. 23:21 1 John 2:2 Isa. 53:6b 1 Pet. 2:24

Romans 4:1-25

In the previous paragraph, in the third chapter of Romans, the apostle has unfolded the plan of redemption and the ground of God's righteousness for sinful men. He then takes up the means by which His righteousness is to become available. This is faith. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference" (3:22).

This is the one condition through which we receive the divine righteousness and the salvation of Jesus Christ. But a condition so important requires to be made very plain, and therefore the entire fourth chapter is devoted to the exposition of faith and the illustration of this important law.

He shows them that it has always been the condition of God's blessing, even under the Old Testament; and in order to prove this, he cites the examples of Abraham and David, the two most prominent saints of the old dispensation.

Abraham represented the patriarchal and David the kingly period, and both of these, he shows, were saved and dealt with by the Lord under the law of faith.

Abraham was the Columbus of faith, the great discoverer of this promised land; and David was the Joshua of faith, the great conqueror of this new world of holy possibilities.

Abraham, however, was justified by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (4:3). David also expressed the same truth when he said in Psalm 32:1-2, "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

This is evidently the righteousness which is not intrinsic, but comes to the person receiving it by a divine reckoning, and not by a personal right.

Then he unfolds four great features of this principle of faith, as illustrated especially in the story of Abraham.

IT IS FAITH WITHOUT WORKS

If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man
Whose sin the Lord will never count against him."
(Romans 4:7-8)

It was not in any sense connected with Abraham's own personal acts of righteousness, but was an act of God's free grace bestowed upon Abraham just as it is now bestowed upon any sinful man.

The peculiarity of faith is that it gives up our works, and takes God's works instead. The man who works for a thing expects to do it himself; the man who believes for a thing expects God to do it. "Now we who have believed enter that rest . . . for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:3a, 10).

IT IS FAITH WITHOUT DISTINCTION

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (Romans 4:9-13)

It does not rest upon the fact that Abraham belonged to the privileged class, because Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, and thus recognized as a Jew.

In fact, it was because he was already justified by faith that he was circumcised. He had the reality first, and then he was entitled to the outward sign and seal.

So Abraham represents the Gentile world and the provision of the gospel for them as fully as for the Jew, and teaches us that believers of every age inherit the promises, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

The gospel of faith is not the birthright of the few, but the inheritance of a sinful world, on the simple condition of believing God and accepting the promises through Jesus Christ.

IT IS FAITH WITHOUT SIGHT

As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (4:17-18)

This is a very wonderful passage. It lays the deep foundations of faith, and unfolds its profound principles in such a manner as to distinguish it forever from all its counterfeits.

It teaches us that Abram believed God, to the extent of counting the things that are not as though they were. This is illustrated in his life, in the fact that he accepted the promise of Isaac as a certainty long before it occurred and so fully counted upon it that he even took the new name, Abraham, which was the outward confession of this faith.

Before a criticizing and scorning world he calls himself the father of a multitude of nations, when the one from whom they were to come was as yet unborn and, according to all natural possibilities, never could be born—as *his* child, at least.

In the account of God's covenant with Abraham in the 17th chapter of Genesis we have a very wonderful unfolding of the principle of faith, in counting the things that are not as though they were.

God comes to Abraham as *El Shaddai*, the Almighty God, revealing Himself in the form that seemed to challenge Abraham's highest trust, and He then proceeds to give him His covenant in three very wonderful revelations. The first of these is in the future tense—the promise, "I *will* confirm my covenant between me and you and *will* greatly increase your numbers" (Genesis 17:2, italics added).

Abraham accepts this as faith ever does in its first stages, in the future tense, and believed that God would do as He had said.

But now he comes nearer and gets upon his face before God, and God begins to talk with him more intimately, giving him a second message. But this is the present tense. God never repeats Himself. When He speaks to us He has always something more to say. So now it is: "As for me, this *is* my covenant with you" (17:4a, italics added). The thing has now become a present fact, and so Abraham receives it and takes a step further, from the future into the present. This is the faith that takes God's gift and counts it real.

But this is not all. Once more God speaks, and now it is another step further on. He moves from the present into the perfect tense, and His next word is, "No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I *have* made you a father of many nations" (17:5, italics added).

Henceforth it must be thought of, spoken of, acknowledged as something completed and past. In the eyes of men it is not yet a fact, nor even a probability; but in the sight of God it is done, and faith counts the things that are not as though they were.

Now in all this Abraham was just imitating God. The true reading of this passage (Romans 4:17) is, "Like Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

In acting in this way, Abraham simply acted like God. This is the way God acts. He speaks of "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Now, Christ was not slain actually before the creation of the world, but in the purpose of God. He was to be offered on Calvary, and God acted as if this were really done. It was so certain that God counted it as if it were already accomplished, and on the ground of this He saved the Old Testament saints and acted toward them on the understanding that the price was already paid and the redemption already consummated.

So we find God acting continually in His dealings with His people. God came to Gideon and said, as He met him on his threshing floor where he was hiding from the Midianites, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12). Now, Gideon was anything but a mighty warrior; indeed, he was as frightened as he could be, and at that very time was hiding from his enemies. The message must have astonished him. But God immediately added, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel" (6:14).

But the strength was not Gideon's, but God's. God constituted that strength, and from that moment Gideon could count it as though it was, and so he went and delivered Israel. The things that were not, he counted as though they were. The power of God became his power, and the unseen crystallized into the real.

So Jesus said to the man that lay at His feet helpless, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5b). That word made the forgiveness real, and as the man accepted it and rose up to meet it, it was actually fulfilled in him.

In this same way the sinner is saved. Tonight, some poor, reeking drunkard in yonder mission may kneel at the altar of penitence, and a voice will say to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven," and that which an instant before was not true, will become true by his claiming it. Abraham's faith will again be fulfilled, and that man will go forth into a new life and a happy future by counting the things that are not as though they were.

So Jesus said to His disciples, speaking of the future, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). A moment before they were not clean, but they became clean the moment they accepted it and counted it real.

And so we must take our sanctification by faith, counting it real before it is real. Just as simply speaking the marriage vow constitutes that girl a wife, puts out of existence her former single life and puts before her a new future, so that simple act of faith constitutes a new life in Christ, and brings us into union with Him as our Sanctifier and Keeper.

So, again, that simple word of healing constituted that which it proclaimed. "You may go. Your son will live" (John 4:50a) brought about a state of things which did not exist a moment before. God called the thing that was not as though it were, which answering to the word, came to pass as He had spoken.

So, again, in the promise He has given in connection with prayer, when we ask, we must believe that we do receive the things that we ask, and we shall have them.

The very element of faith is the unseen. It is not correct to say, I have seen, therefore I believe. The true formula is “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (20:29b). For the faith that brings us into contact with the gospel is “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). It not only believes in the thing that does not exist, but it acknowledges it, proclaims it, steps out upon it, puts its weight upon it, and acts as if it were really so.

This was true of Abraham. When the promise of Isaac came to him, it seemed impossible that he could have a son through Sarah, his own wife, for she was aged and infirm. For a while Abraham, like other people, went to work to try to help God in the difficulty. With the consent of Sarah, he took unto himself a handmaiden, and Hagar became the mother of Ishmael, through no purpose of evil, or no gross or earthly motive, but simply from an honest desire to bring about God’s promise. The only effect of this expedient was to bring sorrow to all concerned, most of all to Sarah and Abraham themselves.

And when they got through trying, God asked Abram to believe that this thing would come to pass through Sarah; and He not only made him believe but confess it to all his neighbors before it happened by taking the name Abraham; and it is probable that he had to explain why he took it, so as to make it very clear and explicit.

When they got through criticizing him God began to act, and before long the thing was fulfilled. Isaac was born, and the thing that seemed impossible came to pass. God quickened the dead; He supernaturally revived the power of Sarah and the child was born as one out of the grave.

This is the way God always loves to work. He can do a great deal more with a dead man than with a living man. In fact,

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that none may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

IT IS FAITH WITHOUT DOUBT

Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:19-21)

This is the last phase of Abraham’s faith. “He staggered not,” (Romans 4:20, KJV)—literally, he *wavered* not. There is a great difference between staggering and wavering. To stagger indicates that one is about to fall, but wavering implies a much milder form of weakness. Abraham did not even manifest the flutter of a doubt; not a fiber of his being shrank; not for a moment did he hesitate. When the command came to sacrifice his son, “early the next morning Abraham got up” (Genesis 22:3a) and instantly obeyed.

It is not great doubts that hurt us, but little ones. Moths are mightier foes than fierce conflagrations and midnight robbers. The man that never wavers will never be tempted to stagger. The time to meet the doubt is at its beginning, in the faintest form of questioning. The only safe place or faith is in the absolute, unfaltering confidence, every moment, in the love of God. If we once begin to question, we are inevitably lost. If we believe God we must believe Him utterly. The closer our relationship, the more perfectly will be our confidence.

A man must have absolute trust in the one that lies nearest his heart. The faintest question or doubt is fatal to happiness or peace. If we believe God, we must believe Him entirely. Wavering always springs from unbelief. We may call it by all the gentle names we like, but it literally means I do not quite believe my God.

Again, we are told that he did not look at the obstacles. “He considered not his own body” (Romans 4:19a, KJV). If we look at outward things we will never have unfaltering faith. If we trust because we feel happy, we will soon cease to feel happy, or trust either. If we feel confidence in our healing because we see improvement, we will soon cease to improve. If we believe God is answering our prayers because we see something happening, we will soon cease to see anything.

The revised version of this passage, however, is better. He did not look at the difficulties without being discouraged by them. “He considered his own body without being weakened in faith.” It is a great thing to be able to look at the adverse side without being weakened in faith, to take in the full situation, to let Satan make out his inventory completely, to admit all his resources, and then to say, “Yes, this is all true—but God—God is equal to it, notwithstanding all.”

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (8:35a). Then he names them all, one by one: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword; and rising above them all, he cries:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth,

nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (8:37-39)

Again, it is added, “Being fully persuaded that God had power [was able, KJV] to do what he had promised” (4:21). The word “able” here is literally “mighty.” It means that God is not only able to do it, but that it is easy for Him to do it; it requires no struggle, effort or sacrifice. All Abraham wanted to know was that God said it—then it would surely come to pass. No matter about the source from which it was to come. God had infinite resources, and it was nothing for Him to accomplish His purpose or fulfill His mightiest word.

We see here the very essence of faith. It is not merely an intellectual process. Abraham’s faith reposed on God Himself. He knew the God he was dealing with. It was a personal confidence in the One whom he could utterly trust. The real secret of Abraham’s whole life was that he was the friend of God, and knew God to be his great, good and faithful Friend, and, taking Him at His word, he had stepped out from all that he knew and loved and gone forth upon an unknown pathway with none but God; and all the way along he leaned upon Him as upon a true and trusted Friend.

Beloved, are we trusting not only in the Word of God, but have we learned to lean our whole weight upon Himself, the God of infinite love and power, our covenant God and everlasting Friend?

Now we are told that Abraham glorified God by this life of faith. The true way to glorify God is to let the world see what He is and what He can do. God does not want us so much to do things as to let people see what He can do. God is not looking for extraordinary characters as His instruments, of whom people will say, “Why yes, it is nothing for him to do it,” but He is looking for humble instruments through whom He can be honored throughout the ages; and the man who trusts his God is really doing higher service than the greatest workers and the most brilliant men whose lives may be but a reflection of their own radiance and a monument to their own glory.

The apostle closes this chapter by telling us that God expects substantially the same faith from us under the gospel, and we shall inherit the same blessings as Abraham if we follow in the footsteps of his faith, for

The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (4:23-25)

Surely if Abraham, in the dawn of revelation with but a few scattered rays of heavenly light, could so fully trust in God, how much more should we, after centuries of gospel light and in the full meridian blaze of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, be able to trust Him too, with a strength and steadfastness that even Abraham never knew.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1). “God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (11:40).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Abraham had the faith of God, “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4:20). **What impairs us from having this same kind of faith?**

Romans 5:1-11

THE BLESSINGS THAT FLOW FROM JUSTIFICATION

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

This chapter is an inventory of the treasures of the house of faith and the blessings that flow from justification by faith. In the preceding chapters the apostle had unfolded the principles of God’s righteousness and the conditions through which it is received; and now, before he closes this second chapter on the divine salvation, he proceeds to enumerate and sum up the special blessings of this great salvation. In so doing he anticipates a little the subject of sanctification, which is to come in the next chapter; and so we find some things in this enumeration which properly belonged to the sanctified life. We must not think this strange or illogical, because while in the nature of things justification and sanctification are distinct and are very distinctly treated in this epistle, yet in the mind of God they are associated very closely, and in the experiences of the believer they ought not to be as widely separated as they usually are.

Indeed, it seems to be the thought of God that they should immediately succeed each other. When God’s people left Egypt, He meant them to go immediately into the land of Canaan, and if they allowed an interval of 40 years to intervene, it was not because God wanted it.

And so, in the Pentecostal experience of the Apostolic Church, it would seem as if all who accepted Jesus were at once taken into His fullness and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the same as the apostles—passing at once into the sanctified life, living in entire consecration—so that it could be said, “No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own . . . and much grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:32b, 33b).

Through the lowering of the Christian standard, there has come about a kind of Christianity which has no spiritual warrant; a condition in which people are justified and yet do not expect to live a holy life—and do not live it, until through truer teaching and the preparation of God’s Spirit they are awakened to realize the true life of holiness to which God has called them, and after years of wandering they at length come into the experience of sanctification which they should have known from the first.

While the summary of blessings which the apostle unfolds in this chapter has reference chiefly to the fruits of justification, yet it reaches out into all the fullness of the believer’s sanctified life and takes in, by anticipation, some of the things which are to be more explicitly unfolded in the chapters that follow.

PEACE WITH GOD

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God” (5:1). The revised and correct reading is, “Let us have peace with God.” Dr. Marvin R. Vincent, in his critical notes on this verse, says: “This is undoubtedly the true reading, but the commentators have been perplexed to understand why it should be put in this way rather than the simple indicative mood—we have peace. Why should he say, ‘let us have peace,’ when we have it already? For the peace spoken of here is not a feeling of peace, but it is the condition of heaven, a reconciliation with God through the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are brought out of a condition of alienation and separation into one of acceptance and peace. The controversy is ended. There is no condemnation. We are regarded and treated as friends and received into His family as children and joint heirs with Christ. Now why should it be said, “let us have peace,” when we have it already?

Well, there is doubtless a very profound reason for it, and perhaps it will appear if we were to put the emphasis on the word *have*. Let us *have* peace. God has made it, now let us take it. Many persons are trying to make peace, but peace is already made through Jesus Christ, and all that God asks of us is to take the reconciliation that He offers and have the peace that He has arranged. Many persons are acting toward God as if He were at war with them, as if everything were against them and God was their worst enemy. The truth is, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19a), and the death of Jesus was the outflow of His own personal and sovereign love; and when we see this and know it, we are ready to lay down our arms and become His friends.

THE DISCIPLINE OF TRIAL

“We glory in tribulations, also” (Romans 5:3, KJV). It is rather remarkable that the two words employed in this expression are both extreme words, one denoting the highest triumph, and the other the profoundest suffering. Sorrow is spoken of not by an ordinary term, but by a word denoting the hardest kind of sorrow. *Tribulation* is literally derived from a root signifying a flail, and it means a kind of suffering that leaves us bruised and beaten, as the wheat that has been threshed on the summer floor.

On the other hand, the word *glory* expresses the very highest kind of joy and triumph. It is not mere enduring, patience or even long-suffering, but it is triumphant, and even ecstatic, joy. It suggests the idea that while ordinary joy may carry us through ordinary trials, when we come to the deepest afflictions and the hardest places we must have the very highest experiences of divine joy and rise even to the spirit of glorying in the Lord.

But there is also a sober side to trial: the quiet, steady schoolroom of patience and proving which must follow the long strain that so often comes after the first victorious conflict.

“Tribulation worketh patience; patience (not experience, but), proving; and proving, hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed” (5:3b-5a, author’s translation). This is the deep, settled establishing that comes through patient suffering and the joy of the Lord. We want the joy to inspire us for the long-continued test, and then, when faith is proven, and patience has its perfect work (James 1:4), there comes a holy confidence which “maketh not ashamed,” and a sense of the divine love which has been proved in the severest ordeal which can come to human hearts and lives. This is the glory of our great salvation, that it sustains the human heart in the trying hour. Other things will do with prosperity, health and highest happiness, but Christ has this supreme glory, that His grace shines most conspicuously when everything else fails, and that the Christian’s brightest hours are often those that are overshadowed by earth’s heaviest trials.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

When a person receives Christ, he is “justified”—(just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned), or made acceptable to God, and can freely enter His holy presence. This entirely changes the person’s relationship with God (who now is His Father), and also with the world about him. He longs for others to know Him too. God is no longer a fear or dread to him, for in Matt. 11:29 Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” **Why is there no peace in the minds and consciences of those who are not justified by faith?**

Isa. 59:1,8,13-15 Isa. 48:22

Following a person's justification by faith in Christ, what assurances does he have in the Word regarding abiding peace and eternal security?

Isa. 12:1-2 Isa. 26:3 Isa. 53:5 Luke 7:50 John 14:27 John 16:33 Acts 10:36 Rom. 4:8 Rom. 8:36-39
Gal. 5:22 Eph. 2:14-16 Phil. 4:6-8 Col. 1:20 Col. 3:16 2 Thess. 3:16 Heb. 10:22

Use the following words to fill in the blanks below:

faith for against character love hope

"In this world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). But for the believer, trials work ___ him and not ___ him. Suffering builds Christian _____. Here note how the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22) is experienced: _____ (Rom. 5:5); _____ (Rom. 5:2); and _____ (Rom. 5:1).

Romans 5:12-21

The terms "in Adam" and "in Christ" are very little understood by Christians. We are all born "in Adam," and Romans 5:12-21 reveals to us what we are "in Adam." We are constituted sinners, not by the sins we commit, but by being in Adam. All of us sinned before we were born, because we were "in Adam" when he sinned. If your great-grandfather had died when he was three years old, where would you be? You would have died in him! Your experience was bound up with his. You are involved in Adam's sin, and by being born "in Adam" we receive all that is of Adam; that is, the Adam nature which is the nature of a sinner.

The vital question then is, "How can I get out of Adam?" We came in by birth, therefore we can only get out by death and it is just this way of escape that God has provided. "All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3). To be "in Christ" is to have been identified with Him in His death and resurrection. The Cross is the power of God which translates us from Adam into Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 15:46-47, the Lord Jesus Christ is called by two names—"the last Adam," and "the second Man." The Scripture does not refer to Him as the second Adam or as the last Man, for as the last Adam He is the sum total of humanity, and as the second Man He is the Head of a new race of man. As the last Adam He gathers up into Himself all that was in Adam; as the second Man, having by His Cross done away with the first man in whom God's purpose was frustrated, He brings in another Man in whom that purpose is fully realized. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 ARV). By the Cross, God wiped out the whole of the old creation, and out of death a new creation is brought in, in Christ, the second Man. If we are "in Adam," all that is "in Adam" necessarily devolves upon us. Likewise, if we are "in Christ," all that is in Him comes to us by free grace without effort on our part, on the ground of simple faith.

(Twelve Baskets Full Vol 3, Watchman Nee)

Study the following Scripture verses which declare that all who are born on this earth are sinners:

Ps. 14:1-3 Ps. 51:5 Ps. 53:5 Rom. 3:23 1 Cor. 15:22

Following the above, look up the following verses, and describe in your own words the contrast between these and the first ones, and what these truths mean to you personally.

Heb. 2:14-15 Rom. 5:9 John 3:16-17 2 Thess. 2:13 1 Thess. 5:9 1 Pet. 1:5 1Pet. 4:13 Phil. 2:12
Eph. 2:8 1Cor. 1:18 Heb. 9:28

Romans 6:1-3

In Adam all was lost. Through the disobedience of one man we were all constituted sinners. By him sin entered and death through sin, and throughout the race sin has reigned unto death from that day on. But now a ray of light is cast upon the scene. Through the obedience of Another we may be constituted righteous. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and as sin reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:19-21). Our despair is in Adam; our hope is in Christ.

God clearly intends that this consideration should lead to our practical deliverance from sin. Paul makes this quite plain when he opens chapter 6 of his letter with the question: "Shall we continue in sin?" His whole being recoils at the very suggestion. "God forbid!" he exclaims. How could a holy God be satisfied to have unholy, sin-fettered children? And so—"How shall we any longer live therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2). God has surely therefore made adequate provision that we should be set free from sin's dominion.

But here is our problem: We were born sinners; how then can we cut off our sinful heredity? Seeing that we were born in Adam, how can we get out of Adam? Let me say at once, the Blood cannot take us out of Adam. There is only one way. Since we came in by birth we must go out by death. To do away with our sinfulness we must do away with our life. Bondage to sin came by birth; deliverance from sin comes by death—and it is just this way of escape that God has provided. Death is the secret of emancipation. “We died to sin” (Rom. 6:2)

But how can we die? Some of us have tried very hard to get rid of this sinful life, but we have found it most tenacious. What is the way out? It is not by trying to kill ourselves, but by recognizing that God *has* dealt with us in Christ. This is summed up in the apostle’s next statement: “All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death” (Rom.6:3).

But if God has dealt with us “in Christ Jesus,” then we have got to be in Him for this to become effective, and that now seems just as big a problem. How are we to “get into” Christ? Here again God comes to our help. We have in fact no way of getting in, but, what is more important, we need not *try* to get in, for we *are* in. What we could not do for ourselves, God has done for us. *He has put us* into Christ. Let me remind you of 1 Corinthians 1:30. I think that is one of the best verses of the whole New Testament: “Ye are in Christ.” How? “Of Him (that is, “of God”) are ye in Christ.” Praise God! It is not left to us either to devise a way of entry or to work it out. We need not plan how to get in. God has planned it and He has not only planned it but He has also performed it. “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.” We *are in*, therefore we need not *try* to get in. It is a divine act and it is accomplished.

Now if this is true, certain things follow. In the illustration from Hebrews 7 we saw that “in Abraham” all Israel—and therefore Levi who was not yet born—offered tithes to Melchizedek. They did not offer separately and individually, but they were in Abraham when he offered, and his offering included all his seed. This, then, is a true figure of ourselves as “in Christ.” When the Lord Jesus was on the Cross all of us died—not individually, for we had not yet been born—but, being in him, we died in him. “One died for all, therefore all died” (2 Cor 5:14). When he was crucified all of us were crucified there with him.

Many a time when preaching in the villages of China one has to use very simple illustrations for deep divine truth. I remember once I took up a small book and put a piece of paper into it, and I said to those very simple folk, “Now look carefully. I take a piece of paper. It has an identity of its own, quite separate from this book. Having no special purpose for it at the moment I put it into the book. Now I do something with the book. I mail it to Shanghai. I do not mail the paper, but the paper has been put into the book. Then where is the paper? Can the book go to Shanghai and the paper remain here? Can the paper have a separate destiny from the book? No! Where the book goes the paper goes. If I drop the book in the river the paper goes too, and if I quickly take it out again I recover the paper also. Whatever experience the book goes through the paper goes through with it, for it is still there in the book.”

“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.” The Lord God himself has put us in Christ, and in his dealing with Christ, God has dealt with the whole race. Our destiny is bound up with his. What he has gone through we have gone through, for to be “in Christ” is to have been identified with him in both his death and resurrection. He was crucified: then what about us? Must we ask God to crucify us? Never! When Christ was crucified we were crucified; and his crucifixion is past, therefore ours cannot be future. I challenge you to find one text in the New Testament telling us that our crucifixion is in the future. All the references to it are in the Greek aorist, which is the “once-for-all” tense, the “eternally past” tense. (See: Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14.) And just as no man could ever commit suicide by crucifixion, for it were a physical impossibility to do so, so also, in spiritual terms, God does not require us to crucify ourselves. We were crucified when Christ was crucified, for God put us there in him. That we have died in Christ is not merely a doctrinal position, it is an eternal and indisputable fact.

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

How does baptism give us a clearer understanding of those truths stated above concerning our identification with Him?

Why is the statement “By baptism we are buried with Him into death” not true?

Romans 6:4-10

The resurrection of Christ is here, as generally in the New Testament, ascribed to the Father, who therein proclaimed His judicial satisfaction with and acceptance of His whole work in the flesh, “even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4b) The parallel here is not (as the apostle’s language might seem to say) between Christ’s resurrection and our *walking* in newness of life, but between Christ’s resurrection and our *resurrection* to newness of life—henceforth to *walk* in it. Believers, immediately on their union to the risen Savior, rise to a new resurrection-life—the life, in fact, of their risen Lord—as is once and again emphatically expressed in the sequel. Here, taking this for granted, the apostle advances to the practical development of this new life, saying, in effect, ‘That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also, *risen with Him*, should, as new creatures, walk conformably.’ But what is that

"newness?" Surely if our *old life, now dead, and buried with Christ, was wholly sinful*, the *new*, to which we rise with the risen Savior, must be altogether a holy life; so that every time we go back to "those things whereof we are now ashamed" (v. 21), we tell lies about our resurrection with Christ to newness of life, and "forget that we have been purged from our old sins" (2 Pet 1:9).

(Bible Commentary Vol. 3, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Does the death of Christ not only provide an atonement for sin but also a death to sin itself for the believer "that the body of sin might be done away with," (Rom 6:6)?

Was our position of forgiveness granted to us?

Has our position of death and resurrection with Christ been granted to us; so that we don't have to try to get into His death and resurrection?

Ps. 106:12

Romans 6:11-13

We now come to a matter on which there has been some confusion of thought among the Lord's children. It concerns what follows this knowledge. Note again first of all the wording of Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him." The tense of the verb is most precious, for it puts the event right back there in the past. It is first, once-for-all. The thing has been done and cannot be undone. Our old man has been crucified once and forever, and he can never be un-crucified! This is what we need to know.

Then, when we know this, what follows? Look again at our passage. The next command is in verse 11: "Even so *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin." This, clearly, is the natural sequel to verse 6. Read them together: "Knowing that our old man was crucified, ... *reckon* ye yourselves to be dead." That is the order. When we know that our old man has been crucified with Christ, then the next step is to *reckon* it so.

Unfortunately, in presenting the truth of our *union* with Christ, the emphasis has too often been placed upon the second matter of reckoning ourselves to be dead, as though that were the starting point, whereas it should rather be upon *knowing* ourselves to be dead. God's Word makes it clear that "knowing" is to precede "reckoning." "Know this ... reckon." The sequence is most important. Our reckoning must be based on the knowledge of divinely revealed fact, for otherwise faith has no foundation on which to rest. When we know, then we reckon spontaneously.

So in teaching this matter we should not over-emphasize reckoning. People are always trying to reckon without knowing. They have not first had a Spirit-given revelation of the fact; yet they try to reckon, and soon they get into all sorts of difficulties. When temptation comes they begin to reckon furiously. "I am dead; I am dead; I am dead!" but in the very act of reckoning they lose their temper. Then they say, "It doesn't work. Romans 6:11 is no good." And we have to admit that verse 11 is no good without verse 6. So it comes to this, that unless we know for a fact that we are dead with Christ, the more we reckon, the more intense will the struggle become, and the issue will be sure defeat.

For years after my conversion I had been taught to reckon. I reckoned from 1920 until 1927. The more I reckoned that I was dead to sin, the more alive I clearly was. I simply could not believe myself dead, and I could not produce the death. Whenever I sought help from others I was told to read Romans 6:11, and the more I read Romans 6:11 and tried to reckon, the further away death was: I could not get at it. I fully appreciated the teaching that I must reckon, but I could not make out why nothing resulted from it. I have to confess that for months I was troubled. I said to the Lord, "If this is not clear, if I cannot be brought to see this which is so very fundamental, I will cease to do anything. I will not preach any more; I will not go out to serve thee any more; I want first of all to get thoroughly clear here." For months I was seeking, and at times I fasted, but nothing came through.

I remember one morning—that morning was a real morning and one I can never forget—I was upstairs sitting at my desk reading the Word and praying, and I said, "Lord, open my eyes!" And then in a flash I saw it. I saw my oneness with Christ. I saw that I was in Him, and that when He died I died. I saw that the question of my death was a matter of the past and not of the future, and that I was just as truly dead as he was because I was in him when he died. The whole thing had dawned upon me. I was carried away with such joy at this great discovery that I jumped from my chair and cried, "Praise the Lord, I am dead!" I ran downstairs and met one of the brothers helping in the kitchen and laid hold of him. "Brother," I said, "do you know that I have died?" I must admit he looked puzzled. "What do you mean?" he said, so I went on: "Do you know that Christ has died? Do you not know that I died with him? Do you not know that my death is no less truly a fact than his?" Oh it was so real to me! I longed to go through the streets of Shanghai shouting the news of my discovery. From that day to this I have never for one moment doubted the finality of that word: "I have been crucified with Christ."

I do not mean to say that we need not work that out. Yes, there is an outworking of the death which we are going to see presently, but this, first of all, is its basis. I have been crucified: in Christ it has been done.

What, then, is the secret of reckoning? To put it in one word, it is revelation. We need revelation from God himself (Matt. 16:17; Eph. 1:17, 18). We need to have our eyes opened to the fact of our union with Christ, and that is something more than knowing it as a doctrine. Such revelation is no vague indefinite thing. Most of us can remember the day when we said clearly that Christ died for us, and we ought to be equally clear as to the time when we saw that we died with Christ. It should be nothing hazy, but very definite, for it is with this as basis that we shall go on. It is not that I reckon myself to be dead, and therefore I will be dead. It is that, because I am dead—because I see now what God has done with me in Christ—therefore I reckon myself to be dead. That is the right kind of reckoning. It is not reckoning toward death but from death.”

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

Jesus clearly taught His disciples regarding His own soon-coming death and resurrection—(see Matt. 16:21-26)—yet at the same time He was referring to a necessary “death and resurrection” for each believer. **Carefully study the following Scriptures, and ask yourself if you have received clear revelation from God’s Word, so that, without doubting, you can reckon yourself dead (past tense). Accompanying that, can you also know and reckon that you are now alive in Christ? Put this assurance (or lack thereof) in as clear a statement as possible in connection with this lesson.**

Matt. 16:17,21-26 John. 12:24 Rom. 6:3-11 Gal. 2:20 Eph. 1:17 Col. 2:11-13,20 Col. 3:3 2 Tim. 2:11 1 Peter 2:24

Romans 6:14-23

“For us, then, the two greatest facts in history are these: that all our sins are dealt with by the Blood, and that we ourselves are dealt with by the Cross. But what now of the matter of temptation? What is to be our attitude when, after we have seen and believed these facts, we discover the old desires rising up again? Worse still, what if we fall once more into known sin? What if we lose our temper, or worse? Is the whole position set forth above proved thereby to be false?

Now remember, one of the devil’s main objects is always to make us doubt the divine facts. (Compare Gen. 3:4.) After we have seen, by revelation of the Spirit of God, that we are indeed dead with Christ, and have reckoned it so, he will come and say: “There is something moving inside. What about it? Can you call this death?” When that happens, what will be our answer? The crucial test is just here. Are we going to believe the tangible facts of the natural realm which are clearly before our eyes, or the intangible facts of the spiritual realm which are neither seen nor scientifically proved.

Now we must be careful. It is important for us to recall again what are the facts stated in God’s Word for faith to lay hold of and what are not. How does God state that deliverance is effected? Well, in the first place, we are not told that sin as a principle in us is rooted out or removed. No, sin is not eradicated. It is very much there, and, given the opportunity, will overpower us and cause us to commit sins again, whether consciously or unconsciously. That is why we shall always need to know the operation of the precious Blood.

But whereas we know that, in dealing with sins committed, God’s method is direct, to blot them out of remembrance by means of the Blood, when we come to the principle of sin and the matter of deliverance from its power, we find instead that God deals with this indirectly. He does not remove the sin but the sinner. Our old man was crucified with him, and because of this the body, which before had been a vehicle of sin, is unemployed (Rom. 6:6). (The verb *katargeo* translated “destroyed” in Romans 6:6 (A.V.) does not mean “annihilated,” but “put out of operation,” “made ineffective.” It is from the Greek root *argos*, “inactive,” “not working,” “unprofitable,” which is the word translated “idle” in Mathew 20:3,6 of the unemployed laborers in the market place—Ed.) Sin the old master, is still about, but the slave who served him has been put to death and so is out of reach and his members are unemployed. The gambler’s hand is unemployed, the swearer’s tongue is unemployed, and these members are now available to be used instead “as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

Thus we can say that “deliverance from sin” is a more scriptural idea than “victory over sin.” The expressions “freed from sin” and “dead unto sin” in Romans 6:7 and 11 imply deliverance from a power that is still very present and very real—not from something that no longer exists. Sin is still there, but we are knowing deliverance from its power in increasing measure day by day.

This deliverance is so real that John can boldly write: “Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin ... he cannot sin” (1 John 3:9), which is, however, a statement that, wrongly understood, may easily mislead us. By it John is not telling us that sin is now no longer in our history and that we shall not again commit sin. He is saying that to sin is not the nature of that which is born of God. The life of Christ has been planted in us by new birth and its nature is not to commit sin.

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

What does Romans 6:14 say about sin in a believer’s life?

Is there a reason why we fail so much to have dominion over our sin?

Is deliverance from sin just as great a gift as our forgiveness from our sins? Did it happen at the same time?

Do we say, "please Lord, come and die for my sins"?

Should we pray to God to "come and deliver me from my sins"?

If a believer has been planted or "crucified" with Christ in His death, and "raised" in Christ's resurrection, what, then, has happened to the believer's old flesh (or carnal) nature?

Ezek. 36:26 John 3:6 Rom. 6:11-14 1 Cor. 15:53 2 Cor. 5:17 Gal. 5:16-21 Phil. 3:20-21 1 Pet. 1:22-25
2 Pet. 1:3-10 1 John 1:7-9

Romans 7:1-25

Romans 6 deals with freedom from sin. Romans 7 deals with freedom from the Law. In chapter 6 Paul has told us how we could be delivered from sin, and we concluded that this was all that was required. Chapter 7 now teaches that deliverance from sin is not enough, but that we also need to know deliverance from the Law. If we are not fully emancipated from the Law, we can never know full emancipation from sin. But what is the difference between deliverance from sin and deliverance from the Law? We all see the value of the former, but where, we wonder, is the need for the latter? For the answer, we must first of all ask ourselves what the Law is, and what is its special value for us.

Romans 7 has a new lesson to teach us. It is found in the discovery that I am "in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5), that "I am carnal" (7:14), and that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (7:18). This goes beyond the question of sin, for it relates also to the matter of pleasing God. We are dealing here not with sin in its forms but with, man in his carnal state. The latter includes the former, but it takes us a stage further, for it leads to the discovery that in this realm too we are totally impotent, and that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). How then is this discovery made? It is made with the help of the Law.

Let us retrace our steps for a minute and attempt to describe what is probably the experience of many. Many a Christian is truly saved and yet bound by sin. It is not that he is necessarily living under the power of sin all the time, but that there are certain particular sins hampering him continually so that he commits them over and over again. One day he hears the full message of the Gospel, that the Lord Jesus not only died to cleanse away our sins, but that when He died He included us sinners in His death; so that not only were our sins dealt with, but we ourselves were dealt with too. The man's eyes are opened and he knows he has been crucified with Christ. Two things follow that revelation. In the first place he reckons that he has died and risen with his Lord. In the second place, recognizing God's claim upon him, and that he has no more right over himself, he presents himself to God as alive from the dead. This is the commencement of a beautiful Christian life, full of praise to the Lord.

But then he begins to reason as follows: "I have died with Christ and am raised with Him, and I have given myself over to Him for ever; now I must do something for Him, since He has done so much for me. I want to please Him and do His will." So, after the step of consecration, he seeks to discover the will of God, and sets himself to carry it out. Then he makes a strange discovery. He thought he could do the will of God, because he thought he loved it, but gradually he finds he does not always like it at all. At times he even feels a distinct reluctance to pursue it, and often when he tries to put it into practice, he finds he cannot. Then he begins to question his experience. He asks himself: "Did I really know? Yes! Did I really reckon? Yes! Did I really give myself to him? Yes! Have I withdrawn my consecration? No! Then whatever is the matter now?" For the more this man tries to do the will of God the more he fails. Ultimately he comes to the conclusion that he never really loved God's will at all, so he prays for the desire as well as the power to do it. He confesses his disobedience and promises never to disobey again. But scarcely has he got up from his knees when he falls once more; before he reaches the point of victory, he is conscious of defeat. Then he says to himself: "Perhaps my last decision was not definite enough. This time I will be absolutely definite." So he brings all his willpower to bear on the situation, only to find greater defeat than ever awaiting him the next time a choice has to be made. Then at last he echoes the words of Paul: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice" (Rom. 7:18, 19). He has reached the point of desperation.

Many Christians find themselves suddenly launched into the experience of Romans 7 and they do not understand why. They fancy Romans 6 is quite enough. Having grasped that, they think there can be no more question of failure, and then to their utmost surprise they find themselves right in the midst of Romans 7. What is the explanation?

First, let us be quite clear that the death with Christ described in Romans 6 is fully adequate to cover all our need. It is the explanation of that death, with all that follows from it in chapter 6, that is as yet incomplete. We are still in ignorance of the truth set forth in chapter 7. For Romans 7 is given to us to explain and make real the statement in Romans 6:14,

that: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." The trouble is that we do not yet know deliverance from law. What, then, is the meaning of Law?

Grace means that God does something for me; law means that I do something for God. God has certain holy and righteous demands which he places upon me: that is law. Now if law means that God requires something of me for their fulfillment, then deliverance from law means that he no longer requires that from me, but Himself provides it. Law implies that God requires me to do something for Him; deliverance from law implies that He exempts me from doing it, and that in grace he does it Himself. I (where "I" is the "carnal" man of chapter 7:14) need do nothing for God: that is deliverance from law. The trouble in Romans 7 is that man in the flesh tried to do something for God. As soon as you try to please God in that way, then you place yourself under law, and the experience of Romans 7 begins to be yours.

As we seek to understand this, let it be settled at the outset that the fault does not lie with the Law. Paul says, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good" (Rom. 7:12). No, there is nothing wrong with the Law, but there is something decidedly wrong with me. The demands of the Law are righteous, but the person upon whom the demands are made is unrighteous. The trouble is not that the Law's demands are unjust, but that I am unable to meet them. It may be all right for the Government to require payment of 100 pounds, but it will be all wrong if I have only ten shillings with which to meet the payment!

I am a man "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). Sin has dominion over me. True, as long as you leave me alone I seem to be rather a fine type of man. It is when you ask me to do something that my sinfulness comes to light.

If you have a very clumsy servant and he just sits still and does nothing, then his clumsiness does not appear. If he does nothing all day he will be of little use to you, it is true, but at least he will do no damage that way. But if you say to him: "Now come along, don't idle away your time: get up and do something," then immediately the trouble begins. He knocks the chair over as he gets up, stumbles over a footstool a few paces further on, then smashes some precious dish as soon as he handles it. If you make no demands upon him his clumsiness is never noticed, but as soon as you ask him to do anything his awkwardness is apparent at once. The demands were all right, but the man was all wrong. He was as clumsy a man when he was sitting still as when he was working, but it was your demands that made manifest the clumsiness which, whether he was active or inactive, was all the time in his make-up.

We are all sinners by nature. If God asks nothing of us, all seems to go well, but as soon as He demands something of us, the occasion is provided for a grand display of our sinfulness. The Law makes our weakness manifest. While you let me sit still I appear to be all right, but when you ask me to do anything I am sure to spoil it, and if you trust me with a second thing I will as surely spoil that also. When a holy law is applied to a sinful man, then it is that his sinfulness comes out in full display.

God knows who I am; He knows that from head to foot I am full of sin; He knows that I am weakness incarnate; that I can do nothing. The trouble is that I do not know it. I admit that all men are sinners, and that therefore I am a sinner; but I imagine that I am not such a hopeless sinner as some. God must bring us all to the place where we see that we are utterly weak and helpless. While we say so, we do not wholly believe it, and God has to do something to convince us of the fact. Had it not been for the Law, we should never have known how weak we are. Paul had reached that point. He makes this clear when he says in Romans 7:7: "I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." Whatever might be his experience with the rest of the Law, it was the tenth commandment, which literally translated is, "Thou shalt not desire..." that found him out. There his total incapacity stared him in the face!

The more we try to keep the Law the more our weakness is manifest and the deeper we get into Romans 7, until it is clearly demonstrated to us that we are hopelessly weak. God knew it all along, but we did not, and so God had to bring us through painful experiences to a recognition of the fact. We need to have our weakness proved to ourselves beyond dispute. That is why God gave us the Law.

So we can say, reverently, that God never gave us the Law to keep: He gave us the Law to break! He well knew that we could not keep it. We are so bad that He asks no favor and makes no demands. Never has any man succeeded in making himself acceptable to God by means of the Law. Nowhere in the New Testament are men of faith told that they are to keep the Law; but it does say that the Law was given so that there should be transgression. "The law came in ... that the trespass might abound" (Rom. 5:20). The Law was given to make us law-breakers! No doubt I am a sinner in Adam; "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: ... for apart from the law sin is dead ... but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:7-9). The Law is that which exposes our true nature. Alas, we are so conceited, and think ourselves so strong, that God has to give us something to test us and prove how weak we are. At last we see it, and confess, "I am a sinner through and through, and of my self I can do nothing whatever to please holy God."

No, the Law was not given in the expectation that we would keep it. It was given in the full knowledge that we would break it; and when we have broken it so completely as to be convinced of our utter need, then the Law has served its purpose. It has been our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that in us He may himself fulfill it (Gal. 3:24).

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

In Romans 7:2 an explanation is given of how a woman is no longer bound to the marriage contract with her husband after her husband dies. **Explain how this illustrates our present relationship to the Law?**

Our former sinful passions under the Law caused us to bear what kind of fruit?

As we, as believers, died in Christ unto the Law (our former “husband”), are we now made alive in Christ by the newness of the Holy Spirit’s power, able now to bring forth fruit unto God? Are you now seeing that we become the Bride of Christ, with Christ as our new Husband?

Rom. 6:14-15 Rom. 7:1-6 Rom. 8:2-4 1 Cor. 1:30-31 Gal. 2:15-21 Gal. 5:5 Eph. 5:25-32
Heb. 10:8-10

Speak to the conflict in Paul’s life between his flesh and the Spirit. Do we go through the same battle in our lives also?

John 8:31-36 Rom. 6:16-23 Gal. 5:18-23 Eph. 4:30-32 Col. 3:5-14 1 Pet. 4:1-5

On becoming a Christian, have you found that it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to completely “give over the reins” of your life to the Lord? Please explain.

Romans 8:1-17

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1, 2 A.V.).

It is in this chapter 8 that Paul presents to us in detail the positive side of life in the Spirit. “There is therefore now no condemnation,” he begins, and this statement may at first seem out of place here. Surely condemnation was met by the Blood, through which we found peace with God and salvation from wrath (Rom. 5:1, 9). But there are two kinds of condemnation, namely, that before God, and that before myself (just as the second may at times seem to us even more awful than the first). When I see that the Blood of Christ has satisfied God, then I know my sins are forgiven, and there is for me no more condemnation before God. Yet I may still be knowing defeat, and the sense of inward condemnation on this account may be very real, as Romans 7 shows. But if I have learned to live by Christ as my life, then I have discovered the secret of victory, and, praise God, in the inward sense also, “there is therefore now no condemnation.” “The mind of the spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6), and this becomes my experience as I learn to walk in the Spirit. With peace in my heart I have no time to feel condemned, but only to praise Him who leads me on from one fresh victory to another.

But what lay behind my sense of condemnation? Was it not the experience of defeat and the sense of helplessness to do anything about it? Before I saw that Christ is my life, I labored under a constant sense of handicap. Limitation dogged my steps; I felt disabled at every turn; I was always crying out, “I cannot do this! I can not do that!” Try as I would, I had to acknowledge that I “cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8). But there is no “I cannot” in Christ. Now it is: “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

How can Paul be so daring? On what ground does he declare that he is now free from limitation and “can do all things?” Here is his answer: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:2). Why is there no more condemnation? “For ...” says Paul. There is a reason for it; there is something definite to account for it. And the reason is that a law called “the law of the Spirit of life” has proved stronger than another law called “the law of sin and of death.” What are these laws? How do they operate? And what is the difference between sin and the law of sin, and between death and the law of death?

First let us ask ourselves, What is a law? Strictly speaking, a law is a generalization examined until it is proved that there is no exception. We might define it more simply as something which happens over and over again. Each time the thing happens it happens in the same way. We can illustrate this both from statutory and from natural law. For example, in Britain, if I drive a car on the right hand side of the road, the traffic police will stop me. Why? Because it is against the law of the land. If you do it you will be stopped too. Why? For the same reason that I would be stopped: it is against the law, and the law makes no exceptions. It is something which happens repeatedly and unfailingly. Or again, we all know what is meant by gravity. If I drop my handkerchief in London it falls to the ground. That is the effect of gravity. But the same is true if I drop it in New York or Hong Kong. No matter where I let it go, gravity operates, and it always produces the same results. Whenever the same conditions prevail—the same effects are seen. There is thus a “law” of gravity.

Now what of the law of sin and death? If someone passes an unkind remark about me, at once something goes wrong inside me. That is not law; that is sin. But if, when different people pass unkind remarks, the same “something” goes wrong inside, then I discern a law within—a law of sin. Like the law of gravity, it is something constant. It always works the same way. And so too with the law of death. Death, we have said, is weakness produced to its limit. Weakness is “I cannot.” Now if when I try to please God in this particular matter I find I cannot, and if when I try to please

Him in that other thing I again find I cannot, then I discern a law at work. There is not only sin in me but a law of sin; there is not only death in me but a law of death.

Then again, not only is gravity a law in the sense that it is constant, admitting of no exception, but, unlike the rule of the road, it is a "natural" law and not the subject of discussion and decision but of discovery. The law is there, and the handkerchief "naturally" drops of itself without any help from me. And the "law" discovered by the man in Romans 7:23 is just like that. It is a law of sin and, of death, opposed to that which is good, and crippling the man's will to do good. He "naturally" sins according to the "law of sin" in his members. He wills to be different, but that law in him is relentless, and no human will can resist it. So this brings me to the question: How can I be set free from the law of sin and death? I need deliverance from sin, and still more do I need deliverance from death, but most of all I need deliverance from the law of sin and of death. How can I be delivered from the constant repetition of weakness and failure? In order to answer this question, let us follow out our two illustrations further.

One of our great burdens in China used to be the likin tax, a law which none could escape, originating in the Ch'in Dynasty and operating right down to our own day. It was an inland tax on the transit of goods, applied throughout the empire and having numerous barriers for collection, and officers enjoying very large powers. The result was that the charge on goods passing through several provinces might become very heavy indeed. But a few years ago a second law came into operation which set aside the likin law. Can you imagine the feelings of relief in those who had suffered under the old law? Now there was no need to think or hope or pray; the new law was already there and had delivered us from the old law. No longer was there need to think beforehand what one would say if one met a likin officer tomorrow!

And as with the law of the land, so it is with natural law. How can the law of gravity be annulled? With regard to my handkerchief that law is at work clearly enough, pulling it down, but I have only to place my hand under the handkerchief and it does not drop. Why? The law is still there. I do not deal with the law of gravity; in fact I cannot deal with the law of gravity. Then why does my handkerchief not fall to the ground? Because there is a power keeping it from doing so. The law is there, but another law superior to it is operating to overcome it, namely the law of life. Gravity can do its utmost, but the handkerchief will not drop, because another law is working against the law of gravity to maintain it there. We have all seen the tree which was once a small seed fallen between the slabs of a paving, and which has grown until heavy stone blocks have been lifted by the power of the life within it. That is what we mean by the triumph of one law over another.

In just such a manner God delivers us from one law by introducing another law. The law of sin and death is there all the time, but God has put another law into operation—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and that law is strong enough to deliver us from the law of sin and death. It is, you see, a law of life in Christ—the resurrection life that in Him has met death in all its forms and triumphed over it (Eph. 1:19, 20). The Lord Jesus dwells in our hearts in the person of his Holy Spirit, and if, committing ourselves to Him, we let Him have a clear way, we shall find His new law of life superseding that old law. We shall learn what it is to be kept, not by our own insufficient strength, but "by the power of God" (1 Peter 1:5)."

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

How are believers able to experientially walk in the Spirit of Life, free from the law of sin and death. thus pleasing God?

Acts 13:39 Rom. 6:11-14 2 Cor. 5:21 2 Cor. 13:14 Gal. 2:20 Gal. 3:2-4,24,25 Gal. 4:4-7 Gal. 5:16,25
Eph. 4:22-24 2 Tim. 3:14-17 Heb. 2:17-18 2 Pet. 1:2-4 1 John 1:7; 2:6

As Christians, it is still possible to walk in the flesh in these earthly bodies. **However, what serious warnings does the Bible give about continuing in doing this?**

Rom. 8:12-13 Gal. 6:7-9 Eph. 5:5-8

The 8th chapter of Romans is all about being set free! **Below are statements for you to read carefully and prayerfully. When you finish, in a few sentences state what this glorious position in Christ has meant in your life (if you have experienced it).**

- v. 1 – **Because in our hearts we desire to serve God, He doesn't condemn us when we fail.**
- v. 2 – **The law of sin and death is still in effect, but the new law of life in Christ Jesus supersedes the old Law.**
- v. 3-4 – **The law of sin and death couldn't make us righteous, but the new law of life is fulfilled in us by Christ (not by us) as we walk after the Spirit. Through Him we are accounted righteous.**
- v. 5 – **The main concerns of the flesh are: What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?**
- v. 6 – **The mind of the flesh is death; the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. As we allow the Spirit to govern our minds, we think in conformity to the will of God.**
- v. 7-8 – **The flesh is in rebellion to God's laws, so we cannot please God as long as we are in the flesh.**
- v. 9 – **We are not in the flesh when we allow God's Spirit to dwell in us.**
- v. 10-11 – **The Holy Spirit brings us into the resurrected life of Christ.**
- v. 12 – **We don't owe the flesh anything!**
- v. 13 – **Through the power of the Spirit, we are enabled to put to death the deeds of the flesh.**

v. 15 – “Abba” means “Father.”

v. 17 – Compare with Matthew 25:34.

Romans 8:18-27

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Ah, says someone, that must have been written by a man who was a stranger to suffering, or by one acquainted with nothing more trying than the milder irritations of life. Not so. These words were penned under the direction of the Holy Spirit by one who drank deeply of sorrow's cup, indeed by one who suffered afflictions in their acutest forms. Hear his own testimony: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:24-27).

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." This, then, was the settled conviction not of one of "fortune's favorites," not of one who found life's journey a carpeted pathway bordered with roses, but, instead, of one who was hated by his kinsmen, who was many times beaten black and blue, who knew what it was to be deprived not only of the comforts but the bare necessities of life. How, then, shall we account for his cheery optimism? What was the secret of his elevation over his troubles and trials?

The first thing with which the sorely-trying apostle comforted himself was that the sufferings of the Christian are but of brief duration, limited to "this present time." This is in sharp and solemn contrast to the sufferings of the Christ-rejector. His sufferings will be eternal, torment forever in the Lake of Fire. But far different is it for the believer. His sufferings are restricted to this life on earth, that is compared to a flower that comes forth and is cut down, or to a shadow that flees and continues not. A few short years at most, and we shall pass from this vale of tears into that blissful country where groans and sighs are never heard.

Second, the apostle looked forward with the eye of faith to "the glory." To Paul "the glory" was something more than a beautiful dream. It was a practical reality, exerting a powerful influence on him, consoling him in the most trying hours of adversity. This is one of the real tests of faith. The Christian has a solid support in the time of affliction that the unbeliever has not. The child of God knows that in his Father's presence there is "fulness of joy," and that at His right hand there are "pleasures forever more." And faith appropriates them and lives in their comforting cheer. Just as the Israelites in the wilderness were encouraged by a sight of what awaited them in the promised land (Num. 13:23, 26), so the one who today walks by faith and not by sight contemplates that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, but which God by His Holy Spirit has revealed to us (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

(Comfort For Christians, A. W. Pink)

Comment on the following statements:

verses 18-22 – The creation has been mysteriously affected by the fall of man and awaits an emancipation from its blighted condition.

verses 23-27 – Unable to articulate his case before God, the believer lies “groaning” before the Lord and the only effectual relief from the “infirmity” comes from the Spirit.

Romans 8:28

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

How many of God's children through the centuries have drawn strength and comfort from this blessed verse. In the midst of trials, perplexities, and persecutions, this has been a rock beneath their feet. Though to outward sight things seemed to work against their good, though to carnal reason things appeared to be working for their ill, nevertheless, faith knew it was far otherwise. And how great the loss to those who failed to rest in this inspired declaration: what unnecessary fears and doubtings were the consequence.

"All things work together." The first thought occurring to us is this: What a glorious Being is our God, who is able to make all things work! What a frightful amount of evil is in constant motion. What an almost infinite number of creatures

there are in the world. What an incalculable quantity of opposing self-interests are at work. What a vast army of rebels are fighting against God. What hosts of superhuman creatures are ever opposing the Lord. And yet, high above all, is GOD, in undisturbed calm, complete master of the situation. There, from the throne of His exalted majesty, He works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). Stand in awe, then, before this One in whose sight "all nations are as nothing; and they are counted as less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:17). Bow in adoration before this "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15). Lift high your praise to Him who from the direst evil can bring forth the greatest good.

"All things work." In nature there is no such thing as a vacuum, neither is there a creature of God that fails to serve its designed purpose. Nothing is idle. Everything is energized by God to fulfill its intended mission. All things are laboring toward the grand end of their Creator's pleasure; all are moved at His imperative bidding.

"All things work together." They not only operate, they cooperate; they all act in perfect concert, though none but the anointed ear can catch the strains of their harmony. All things work together, not singly but conjointly, as attending causes and mutual helps. That is why afflictions seldom come one at a time. Cloud rises on cloud, storm on storm. As with Job, one messenger of woe is quickly succeeded by another, burdened with tidings of yet heavier sorrow. Nevertheless, even here faith may trace both the wisdom and love of God. It is the compounding of the ingredients in the recipe that constitutes its beneficent value. So with God: His dispensations not only "work," but they "work together." So recognized the sweet singer of Israel: "He drew me out of many waters" (Ps. 18:16).

"All things work together for good to," etc. These words teach believers that no matter what the number nor how overwhelming the character of adverse circumstances, they are all helping to lead them into the possession of their inheritance in heaven. How wonderful the providence of God is in overruling the most disorderly things; and in turning to our good things that in themselves are most pernicious! We marvel at His mighty power that holds the heavenly bodies in their orbits and at the continually recurring seasons and the renewal of the earth. But this is not nearly so marvelous as His bringing good out of evil in all the complicated occurrences of human life, and making even the power and malice of Satan's destructive works to minister good for His children.

"All things work together for good." This must be so for three reasons. First, because all things are under the absolute control of the Governor of the universe. Second, because God desires our good, and nothing but our good. Third, because even Satan himself cannot touch a hair of our heads without God's permission, and then only for our further good. Not all things are good in themselves or in their tendencies; but God makes all things work for our good. Nothing enters our life by blind chance, nor are there any accidents. Everything is being moved by God with this end in view: our good. The subservience of everything to God's eternal purpose works blessing to those marked out for conformity to the image of the Firstborn. All suffering, sorrow, and loss are used by our Father to minister to the benefit of His elect.

"To them that love God." This is the grand distinguishing feature of every true Christian. The reverse marks all the unregenerate. The saints are those who love God. Their creeds may differ in minor details, their ecclesiastical relations may vary in outward form, their gifts and graces may be very unequal; yet, in this particular there is an essential unity. They all believe in Christ, they all love God. They love Him for the gift of the Savior; they love Him as a Father in whom they may confide; they love Him for His personal excellencies, His holiness, wisdom, and faithfulness. They love Him for His conduct: for what He withholds and for what He grants; for what He rebukes and for what He approves. They love Him even for the rod that disciplines, knowing that He does all things well. There is nothing in God and there is nothing from God for which the saints do not love Him. And of this they are all assured, "We love Him because He first loved us."
(Comfort For Christians, A. W. Pink)

Comment on the statement: "All things are arranged for the good of both God and man."

Romans 8:29-39

Now the *word foreknowledge* as it is used in the New Testament is less ambiguous than in its simple form, *to know*. If you carefully study every passage in which it occurs, you will discover that it is a moot point whether it ever has reference to the mere perception of events yet to take place. The fact is *that foreknowledge* is never used in Scripture in connection with events or actions; instead, it always refers to persons. It is to persons God is said to "foreknow," not to the actions of those persons. To prove this we will quote each passage where this expression is found.

The first occurs in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Careful attention to the wording of this verse shows that the apostle was not speaking of God's foreknowledge of the act of the crucifixion, but of the Person crucified: "Him [Christ], being delivered by."

The second is Romans 8:29-30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Weigh well the pronoun used here. It is not *what* He did foreknow, but *whom* He did. It is not the surrendering of their wills, nor the believing of their hearts, but the persons themselves, which is in view.

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Romans 11:2). Once more, the plain reference is to persons, and to persons only.

The last mention is in 1 Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Who are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"? The previous verse tells us the reference is to the "strangers scattered," i.e., the diaspora, the dispersion, the believing Jews. Thus, the reference is to persons and not to their foreseen acts.

Now, in view of these passages (and there are no more), what scriptural ground is there for anyone to say God "foreknew" the acts of certain ones, i.e., their "repenting and believing," and that because of those acts He elected them unto salvation? The answer is, None whatever. Scripture never speaks of repentance and faith as being foreseen or foreknown by God. Truly, He did know from all eternity that certain ones would repent and believe, yet this is not what Scripture refers to as the object of God's foreknowledge. The word uniformly refers to God's foreknowing *persons*; then let us "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13).

Another thing we want to call particular attention to is that the first two passages quoted above show plainly and teach implicitly that God's foreknowledge is not causative; that instead, something else lies behind, *precedes* it—something that is His own sovereign decree. Christ was "delivered by the [1] determinate counsel and [2] foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). His counsel or decree was the ground of His foreknowledge. So again in Romans 8:29. That verse opens with the word *for*, which tells us to look back to what immediately precedes. What, then, does the previous verse say? This: "All things work together for good to them ... who are the called according to his purpose." Thus God's *foreknowledge* is based upon *His purpose*, or decree (see Psalm 2:7).

God foreknows what will be because He has decreed it. It is therefore a reverse order of Scripture, putting the cart before the horse, to affirm that God elects because He foreknows people. The truth is, He foreknows because He has elected. This removes the cause of election from outside the creature and places it in God's own sovereign will. God purposed in Himself to elect a certain people, not because of anything good in them or from them, either actual or foreseen, but solely out of His own pleasure.

Why He chose the ones He did, we do not know. We can only say, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matthew 11:26). The plain truth of Romans 8:29 is that God, before the foundation of the world, singled out certain sinners and appointed them unto salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13). This is clear from Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." God did not predestinate those whom He foreknew were conformed. On the contrary, those whom He foreknew (i.e., loved and elected) He predestinated "to be conformed." Their conformity to Christ is not the *cause*, but the effect of God's foreknowledge and predestination.

God did not elect any sinner because He foresaw that he would believe, for the simple but sufficient reason that no sinner ever believes until God gives him faith, just as no man sees until God gives him sight. *Sight* is God's gift; *seeing* is the consequence of my using His gift. So faith is God's gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) and believing is the consequence of my using His gift. If it were true that God had elected certain ones to be saved because in due time they would believe, that would make believing a meritorious act. In that event, the saved sinner would have ground for "boasting," which Scripture emphatically denies (v. 9).

Surely God's Word is plain enough in teaching that believing is not a meritorious act. It affirms that Christians are a people "which had believed through grace" (Acts 18:27). If, then, they have believed "through grace," there is absolutely nothing meritorious about believing; if nothing meritorious, it could not be the ground or cause which moved God to choose them. No! God's choice proceeds not from anything in or from *us*, but solely from His own sovereign pleasure. Once more, we read of "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). There it is, plain enough; election itself is of grace, and grace is unmerited favor, something for which we had no claim upon God whatsoever.

It is highly important for us to have clear and scriptural views of the foreknowledge of God. Erroneous conceptions about it lead inevitably to thoughts most dishonoring to Him. The popular idea of divine foreknowledge is altogether inadequate. God not only knew the end from the beginning, but also He planned, fixed, and predestinated everything from the beginning. And, as cause stands to effect, so God's purpose is the ground of His prescience. If, then, the reader is a true Christian, he is so because God chose him in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4); and chose you not because *He foresaw* you would believe, but simply because it *pleased Him to choose*; chose you notwithstanding your natural unbelief. This being so, all glory and praise belongs alone to Him. You have no ground for taking any credit to yourself. You have "believed through grace" (Acts 18:27), and that, because your very election was "of grace" (Romans 11:5).

(Gleanings In The Godhead, A. W. Pink)

Comment on the following statements:

verses 29-30 – "that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Col 1:18).

verses 31-32 – “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom 8:32). God made a real sacrifice of that which was dearest to His heart.

verses 33-39 – Who shall pronounce or hold them guilty seeing that God absolved them free from all guilt.

Romans 9:1-Rom 11:36

In the last section we traced the providence of God with respect to God’s saved and sanctified people. In the present section the apostle unfolds the principles of God’s providence as respects the larger field of the world, and more particularly the Jewish nation, God’s covenant people.

The apostle had already established in earlier chapters, the great principle that the gospel applies to all men alike as sinners, irrespective of race and class. So far as salvation is concerned, “there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all the richly blessed all who call on him” (Romans 10:12).

But, lest it might be supposed from this that all God’s promises to Israel are thereby turned aside and transferred to the Gentiles, he now takes up the question of God’s purpose for Israel and His special providence with respect to His chosen people.

Was God’s ancient covenant set aside by some afterthought and rendered of no effect by Israel’s disobedience, or has there been an immutable purpose running through all the centuries like a golden thread, and reaching out to its final fulfillment in the coming ages?

The discussion of this great question occupies the next three chapters, and forms the profoundest and clearest treatise in the Scriptures on Israel’s place in connection with the Gentiles, the gospel, the Christian dispensation and the coming of the Lord.

1. The apostle’s own interest in the subject is obvious. It was very near and dear to his heart—so dear that he could truly say, “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved” (10:1), and that he could almost wish himself accursed from Christ, if by this awful sacrifice his countrymen could be saved (9:3).

Every heart that is in true sympathy with Christ feels in this way respecting Israel. We cannot truly understand our Master’s Spirit if we do not sympathize with His “kinsmen according to the flesh” (9:3b, KJV), and long and labor to save them and bring them into his covenant and will.

All who are interested in the fulfillment of prophecy and the coming of the Lord will ever cherish an intelligent and earnest interest in the seed of Abraham, and will be found laboring and praying for “the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6a).

2. Paul reviews Israel’s calling and God’s covenant with them. The apostle recognizes and magnifies the importance of Israel’s place in God’s purpose and covenants. “. . . the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen” (9:4-5). Separated from the nations, that they might be kept a pure and peculiar people, God made them the repositories of His oracles, the witnesses of His truth and the representatives of His name on earth, admitted them to the most sacred covenant with Himself, made them the teachers of the world and, above all else, kept them as an ancestral line through whom His own Son at length came, in the flesh.

He has given to them promises extending through a thousand generations, which have only begun to be fulfilled. It is doubtless true that there is a spiritual Israel, and that they are not all Israel which are of Israel, and that, in a sense, the promises to Israel are fulfilled to the New Testament Church; yet the promise is still true to the literal Israel, and while Japheth is entitled to share the tent with Shem (Genesis 9:27), he has no right to steal the tent and turn Shem out, robbed of his promises and his inheritance.

The apostle most distinctly recognizes the permanency of God’s covenant with Israel as God’s chosen people through God’s ancient election and His unchanging plan, and so he adds,

And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written,

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. (Romans 11:26-29)

3. Paul establishes Israel's failure to fulfill God's purpose concerning them and their temporary rejection on account thereof. They disbelieved and disobeyed God, and in consequence they were broken off from their own olive tree, and God had to say to them, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people" (10:21).

Through every age of Israel's national history they failed, notwithstanding all God's goodness and grace. The patriarchal age ended in the sin of Israel's sons and their going down to Egypt. The deliverance from Egypt was followed by the wandering in the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan terminated in 400 years of declension. The kingdom of David and Solomon ended in Solomon's mournful backsliding and the division into two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The 10 tribes went out into captivity and apparent extinction. The kingdom of Judah was carried away to Babylon, and even when God restored His captive people and sent His own Son to them as their Prophet, Priest and King, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). He was rejected and crucified, His apostles and disciples were persecuted, and God had to give up Israel for ages of darkness and sorrow unspeakable and unparalleled.

Not only has God permitted the Gentiles to trample them down, but He Himself has visited them with the most dreadful of His judgments—the spirit of slumber and judicial blindness, and the veil still hides the Savior from their eyes, so that the dreadful words of their own prophetic Scriptures have been fulfilled to them:

As it is written:

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes so that they could not see,
and ears so that they could not hear,
to this very day."

And David says:

"May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.
May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever." (Romans 11:8-10)

God told them that all this would happen to them if they disobeyed Him and broke His covenant. In the 26th chapter of Leviticus He announced to them that if they were unfaithful He would bring upon them seven times (or ages) of affliction and judgment (26:18), and for 2,500 years these seven ages have been slowly and terribly fulfilled, until at length the years have almost run out, the "times of the Gentiles are nearly fulfilled, and Israel's times are coming into view once more."

4. The calling of the Gentiles to take Israel's place is revealed:

As he says in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people;
and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"
and,
"It will happen that in the place where it was said to them,
'You are not my people,'
they will be called sons of the living God.'" (Romans 9:25, 26)

Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,
"I will make you envious by those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."
And Isaiah boldly says,
"I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." (10:19, 20)

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! (11:11-12)

If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. (11:17, 18)

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited [wise in your own conceits, KJV]: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. (11:25)

We Gentiles have been in danger of becoming “wise in our own conceits,” and imagining that the gospel was given especially for us. We must not forget that our place is purely a parenthesis, and that we have come in through Israel’s failure, and have simply been grafted in as branches into a tree that was there before ever we were born. We were outcasts and strangers, and have simply been invited in to share the shelter of Israel’s tent, but we must take heed lest we despise the original owners of the tent, and seclude them from their own prerogatives.

Israel had her time of probation and we have ours. It is almost run out. Let us make the best of it, profit by their example, and take heed lest we repeat their sin and share their judgments.

Israel’s fall is the riches of the world! Israel’s casting away, the reconciliation of the world. But let us “not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either” (11:20b, 21).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Israel as a whole was given a spirit of slumber, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear. **Tell us why God brought this upon them.**

Deut. 28:15 Isa. 6:9-10 Ps. 69:22-23 Rom. 9:32-33 John 5:40

Please explain how one could have a certain “zeal” (Rom. 10:2) for God, yet his works are not pleasing unto the Lord. Did the Jews feel a need for salvation? And was their zeal based on knowledge?

Isa. 28:16 Mark 8:31-33 John 3:19-20 1 Cor. 3:12-18 Gal. 3:1-5 Gal. 5:7-8 Gal. 6:7-10 Rom. 2:1-7 Rev. 3:14-19

Would you agree that, instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:24), they worshiped their Law, obeying it outwardly only, and rejected their Savior?

Fill in the following blanks regarding the Gentiles by looking up the accompanying Scriptures:

When Israel rejected her _____, God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved, as predicted by _____ in Deut. 32:21. Paul has mentioned this truth before in Rom. 9:22-26.

One reason why God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles was that they might provoke the Jews to _____ (Rom. 10:19; 11:11).

It was an act of _____ both to the Jews and to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:8, 9). The prophet Isaiah predicted also that God would _____ the Gentiles (Isa. 65:1). In preaching to the Gentiles, Paul called them the _____ grafted into the natural branches (Rom. 11:17-24).

Give the meaning of: the Vine, the natural branches and the wild, olive branches.

Deut. 32:6-21 Jer. 11:16 John 15:1-17 Rom. 10:14-21 Isa. 64:1-8

Does Scripture teach that the Gentiles now being saved could possibly be broken off (if they fell into unbelief), and Israel (as a remnant) could possibly be grafted back into the Vine (their own olive tree)?

Rom. 11:17-24 1 Cor. 10:12 Matt. 10:26 2 Cor. 3:16 Isa. 10:22-23 Zech. 12:10—13:1 Zech. 14:4 Acts 1:11 Rev. 1:7

It now appears God has blessed the Gentiles much more than the Jews. **What warning in these Scriptures should we also take to heart?**

Job. 23:13 Ps. 78:56-58 Ps. 106:43-46 Ps. 115:3 Isa. 14:26-27 Isa. 46:9-10 Ezek. 18:19-32 Ezek. 33:12-20 Amos 3:1-2 Matt. 20:15,16 Matt. 23:37-39 John 3:27 John 6:37-39 John 15:16 Acts 14:14-18 Rom. 10:19-21 Rom. 11:25 2 Thess. 2:13-14 2 Tim. 1:9

Romans 12:1

We have now been led in the course of this wonderful treatise through the revelation of sin, salvation, sanctification and God’s providence and purpose respecting His people and the world, up to the coming of our Lord.

He now proceeds to the practical part of the epistle, and by all these blessings that have been received and all these mercies that have been unfolded, he calls us to consecrate ourselves to God for the service which should be the outcome of all these blessings.

It is most important to notice the place of consecration with reference to sanctification. A mistake in theology or terminology will not hinder God’s blessing. God’s grace is so full and free that He will give it by any door through which

the poor sinful soul may come in the name of Jesus, yet there is a clear and definitely revealed order of spiritual blessing which it is better for us to know and follow, and which the apostle most definitely unfolds in this epistle.

According to that order, salvation comes in the third, fourth and fifth chapters, sanctification in the sixth, seventh and eighth, and now in the 12th chapter consecration follows in its true place, as an entire offering up of our saved and sanctified life to be used for the service and the glory of God.

Now the great object of sanctification or consecration is service. God wants to use us, and He cannot use us until He gets us purified through His own indwelling Spirit.

The popular idea of holiness is that it is to prepare us for heaven. But we find that old Zechariah had light enough to know that God's great purpose of grace for His people was "to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:74, 75).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

While it is true that the surrender of the will is all-important and primary, why then is it so important, even crucial, that the body be surrendered?

1 Cor. 6:20 1 Cor. 7:20-24 Eph. 4:22-29 1 Thess. 5:15-22 2 Tim. 2:3-5 Rom. 6:4-7 Rom. 7:6
Rom. 8:1-2 Rom. 8:8-14 Rom. 8:23

Romans 12:2

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2a).

This separation is twofold. It is negative and positive. It separates us from the world by taking us out of it. "Do not conform" (12:2a). But it separates us from the world in a much better way by taking the world out of us. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (12:2a). This is the true separation. This was the way Christ was separated from the world. He had no affinity for it. Like the sea fowl which plunges into the miry water, and yet rises without a drop adhering to its shining wings, like the pure gold that can go through the flame untouched, so Jesus passed through all scenes and associations with sin without any response in His holy heart.

Man's way is to shut himself up in a monastery and so keep out of the world. God's way is to put Christ into the heart, and so keep the world out of us. Man's way is to give up the dance and the theater. God's way is to get the dance and the theater out of us. The desires of the consecrated girl gravitate heavenward, and the pleasures of the ballroom have no charm for such a heart. This is so much easier than the other way, and then it becomes second nature.

The next result of consecration is to bring us into the will of God. "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (12:2b).

The consecrated spirit is wholly united to the divine will. It chooses it, delights in it and wants to meet it in all its fullness.

There are three stages here in the description of the divine will: the positive, comparative and superlative. There are some who only aim to reach the good will of God. There are others who press on to the pleasing will of God, to a life which pleases God and has the testimony constantly of His acceptance. But there is a perfect will of God into which we may enter and realize all for which He has called us and saved us.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

How can one do a self-evaluation on how far the renewing of the mind has taken place? And what part do repentance, humble prayer, surrender and a desire only for His will have, in bringing it to light?

Ps. 51 Ps. 32 Ps. 139 Jer. 12:3 Ps. 40:6-8 Ps. 26 Ps. 143:10 John 3:21 John 7:17

Romans 12:3-5

True consecration leads to self-renunciation. "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you" (12:3b).

The highest spiritual life is always the lowliest.

It does not minister to spiritual egotism, but destroys it. It does not lead us to recognize our own sanctification, faith or spiritual powers, but rather to see our nothingness and helplessness and entire dependence upon Christ. Its language—with Paul—is, "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves" (2 Corinthians 3:5); "I am less than the least of all God's people" (Ephesians 3:8); "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20a). Its spirit is that of deep humility and self-forgetting lowliness.

True consecration recognizes and receives the strength and sufficiency of Christ and draws its health and life from Him with holy boldness. "In accordance with the measure of faith God has given you" (Romans 12:3). The power of the consecrated life is the grace of the indwelling Spirit of the Holy Christ.

True consecration leads to true individuality. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (12:4-6a).

If the spiritual body were composed of one or two features it would be a monstrosity. If you were made a finger, don't try to be a foot. If you were called to be a fragrant rose, don't continually fret because you are not a sunflower or an orange tree. Be yourself, with Christ shining through you and living in you, and you will fit into your niche and accomplish your high calling.

The most agreeable wood finishing of a building is the natural wood showing all the simple fiber and grain of the tree shining through the translucent varnish. A common pine board, when genuine and natural, is far prettier than the most elaborate daubs of paint. God wants each of us to be true to the natural grain, and then varnished with the crystalline glow of the Holy Spirit.

The truly consecrated spirit is adjustable to others, and easily fits into its place in the body of Christ. "We are all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25b).

The more fully we receive the Holy Spirit, the more perfect will be our fellowship with the people of God and the more simple our adjustment with all other Christians. One who has but a limited measure of grace is apt to be angular, impracticable, determined and hard. But one who is really filled with God can easily see good in others, as well as his own leadings, and work in harmony and fellowship even amid great varieties of temperament and taste.

The secret of true fellowship and cooperation is to see God in one another, and not adhere to the human, but to the divine. Thus, as each of us fits into God's place for us, we will all together make a perfect whole, and nourished by that which every joint supplies, the whole body will grow up to the full stature of Christ.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

What attitude should we have toward our own abilities relative to those of other believers?

Rom 12:6-8

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6-8)

Each of these ministries is equally important in its place. One is called to be a public teacher, another to be a soul-winner, another to be the executive head in some department of Christian work, another a successful merchant and a generous giver, and by his means supply the resources necessary to advance the work of Christ.

Let it be true to his calling, and let everyone have a calling and a definite work for God. There is no place for drones. There is no single member of the body that can be excused from some special ministry, and yet there is no one whose ministry can be regarded as more important than another's. As each is called and fitted, let him be true to his calling and his trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. No one, or two, or 10 should monopolize the work of any church, but all together, in holy, harmonious fellowship, should cooperate in consecrated service. This is the model church. This was the apostolic church, and this is true consecration.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

As believers we have been entrusted with graces and gifts for the benefit of not only believers but all mankind. **How does our tendency toward self sufficiency and lust for power fit into all this?**

Rom 12:9-21

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (12:9-16).

The apostle now brings down the spirit of consecration to the entire range of our social and religious life and presents a very beautiful picture of the consecrated man in the home, the social circle, the business office, the hour of sorrow and the time of gladness.

It will make us very sincere in our expressions of regard, and sanctify us from all the sham phrases of society and the empty compliments with which the world deceives its friends. "Love must be sincere" (12:9a).

It will make us frank in our expressions of disapproval of that which is evil, and intent in our devotion to that which is good. It will make us energetic and enterprising in our business, and yet devout in the midst of the world's bustle and constant in our devotion to the service of God, for His glory.

It will make us bright and beautiful Christians, "joyful in hope" (12:12a), but at the same time it will balance our characters and steady our wing, by making us "patient in affliction" (12:12b) and keeping us "faithful in prayer" (12:12c), and held in holy confidence, calmness and inward recollection by the consciousness of God's overshadowing presence.

It will make us very tender in our consideration of the poor and the homeless, and lead us to "share with God's people who are in need" (12:13a) and to share our hospitality with the household of faith.

It will give a beautiful modesty to our bearing and make us not "conceited" (12:16b), but considerate even to those of lower rank and social standing.

Above all things, the consecrated spirit will make us upright and honest in all relations to our fellow men. "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (12:17b-18).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

How would the works of a person be affected if he had only a distorted, non-truthful view of the things of God?

Isa. 26:3-5 Luke 12:57 Luke 13:3, 5 John 7:17 2 Cor. 4:3-7 2 Cor. 11:3 Eph. 4:22-23 Eph. 4:30-32
Heb. 8:10 1 Pet. 1:13-16

Romans 13:1-10

The New Testament always recognizes the existing conditions of human society, and among them the fact and right of civil government. Christ never encouraged His followers to take any position of antagonism to the political institutions of their time, but on the contrary instructed them to submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or to them who are appointed by him for the administration of government.

If there ever was a time when the gospel had abundant cause to protest against the governments of the day it was the time of Paul, when the cruel Nero sat upon the throne and the other heads of government used their power to oppress the followers of Jesus. But notwithstanding all this, we have the very strongest teaching in this passage that "the powers that be" (Romans 13:1, KJV) are to be recognized as God's appointed ordinances for the administration of justice, and that the true Christian will be a patriot and faithful citizen and do his duty in every relationship of life, thus commending the gospel of Christ even to the governments of the world and letting them see that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor in antagonism to any human authority.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

What does the Word teach Christians regarding their personal manner of life, who reside in a nation whose government does not honor God?

Ex. 9:13-16 Ps. 22:28 Ps. 76:10 Ps. 115:3 Prov. 16:1-4 Prov. 16:9 Prov. 21:1 Dan. 3:8-30 Dan. 4:30-37 Dan. 6:1-28 John 3:18-21 John 3:27 John 15:18-23

Romans 13:11-14

"Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light . . . put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:12, 14). In the ringing call to arms with which the Apostle concludes his letter to the Ephesians, he cries "*Put on the whole armor of God,*" and then repeats "*take up with you to the battle the whole armor of God.*" All the language he uses speaks of decision, and definite action! The *will* of the believer is always taken into account. The rebellious will which has fought so keenly against God, when surrendered and conquered by Him, is not to be crushed and broken, but re-energized by divine power, and turned against the adversary. "Cast off the works of darkness," the apostle cries! Christ has conquered the prince of darkness, and won liberty for the captives under his control. Take your liberty! "Cast off" the works of darkness, and behind you will you find the co-working of the divine Spirit casting off your chains. "Put on the armor of light!" "*Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.*" The "armor" is Christ Himself, who emerged from the tomb Conqueror over death and hell. "Whosoever among you have been baptized *into Christ, have clothed yourself with Christ,*" writes the Apostle to the Galatians. This links the Cross and the armor together, for baptized

into Christ means in spiritual significance being baptized *into His death*. The “clothing with Christ” cannot be meant to cover what is contrary to Christ, or it would be making the believer like the Pharisees, who “outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of . . . all uncleanness.” But the Cross is again the key. The believer submerged into death, so that all which is contrary to Christ is *kept continually crucified*, is “clothed” as well as indwelt by the risen Lord. Cast off darkness! Put on Christ as Light! Be planted into Christ on the Cross, and you become clothed with Christ—the Armor of Light.

(The Warfare with Satan, Jesse Penn-Lewis)

Appraise your own standing and growth in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if your heart feels so led, ask for prayer on any area of difficulty or uncertainty. God’s children are all of one Body, and His love knitting us together causes His Church to stand strong in prayer and true love for one another. This provides a united stand against the enemy of our souls.

Romans 14:1-12

The weak conscience needs further instruction. It is anemic and requires the hilltop, with its further view and bracing air; but in the meantime its owner must be guided by its promptings. A man must not take a certain course merely because others do so, unless he can justify their bolder faith and larger freedom. By thought and prayer and the study of God’s word, conscience becomes educated and strengthened and ceases to worry as to whether we should be vegetarian or not, whether we should observe saints’ days, or adopt a specific method of observing the Sabbath. Some people are constantly wondering and questioning about such things, as though their eternal salvation depended on minute observances.

Such would have found but scant comfort from the apostle. He would have said, “Do the best you know, and when you have once adopted a certain method of life, follow it humbly, until some wider view is opened before you by the Spirit of God.” The main principle for us all is to live and die to please our Lord. He is our Master, and it will be for Him to allot our rewards. In the meantime let us not judge one another, but live in love, leaving each to work out the plan of his own life as his Master directs.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

How should a person be treated who observes certain ordinances or rituals that do not appear to be in line with Christian observances?

Matt. 5:8-9 Matt. 11:6 Rom 12:17-18 1Cor 8:8-12

Romans 14:13-23

We must be careful of one another’s faith. Unkind criticism or ridicule, or the strong pressure of our arguments and reasons may impede the divine life in weaker natures by leading them to act in defiance of their own conscientious convictions. We must not flaunt our greater liberty or urge men to act against their conscience. We may, of course, temperately and lovingly explain why we are not held by minute scruples. We may show, as Paul did repeatedly, that Christ has called us to liberty; but we must not attempt the regulation of one another’s conduct from without. The sanctuary of the soul must be left uninvaded. The Spirit alone may speak his oracles in the shrine.

Leave each disciple to his own Master, each plant to the Gardener, each child to the Father. In many things you may grant yourself a wider liberty than others allow themselves; but it must be used wisely, and you must refuse to avail yourself of it whenever those around you may be imperiled. We need not mind the censorious criticism of the Pharisee, but like the Good Shepherd with his flock, we must accommodate our pace to that of the lambs, Isa 40:11.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Paul went so far as to not eat meat or drink wine so as not to offend the weaker brother. **What other things could we do that could make our brothers stumble?**

1 Cor. 8:13 1 Tim. 4:1-5

Romans 15:1-13

This chapter is remarkable for its threefold designation of God: "the God of patience and consolation," v. 5; "the God of hope," v. 13; and "the God of peace," v. 33. Our character may be deficient in these things, but His fullness is there for

us to draw upon. There is no stint or lack for those to whom He says, "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Hope is fastening on to what is future in the work of Christ. **Would you say our hope is measured by our faith?**

Rom. 15:13

Romans 15:14-21

A superficial judge of the apostle's life at the time to which he refers might have supposed him to be a mere Jewish traveler, hurrying to and fro, under circumstances of extreme poverty and with no special results. But in fact he was laying the foundations of the Christian commonwealth. His one ambition was to present the Gentiles as a whole burnt offering to God; see v. 16. The phrase there is suggestive of the supreme sacrifice which was nobly realized in the strength of purpose that led those churches, shortly afterward, to yield holocausts of martyrs under Nero's persecutions.

All this was due to Christ working through the apostle. Anything that was not wrought through the power of the indwelling Christ was not worth recounting. The work which really mattered was not what Paul did for Christ, but what Christ did through Paul. It is noticeable how careful Paul was to break up new ground. This is especially characteristic of all the best and highest forms of work. It is a poor church which recruits itself from the labors of others, but has no power to secure converts from the world!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Unless we understand the distinctive ministry of Paul, we will not fully appreciate the message of God's grace. Before Paul was converted he was the crusading rabbi. **At that point in his life, did he know anything of the grace of God?**

When was it that he did experience the grace of God?

Acts 9

Was it God's grace only that saved him? That called him? That made Him an apostle?

1 Cor. 15:8-11 Rom. 1:5 Eph. 3:1-21

Would you say that Paul considered His calling as placing him as a priest at the altar, offering up to God the Gentiles he had won to Christ? From 1 Peter 2:5 what would Paul have considered the Gentiles to be?

From Mal 1:6-14 can you see that it was important that the priests offer to God *only* that which was the best?

Here note the involvement of the Trinity in the ministry of the Word: Paul was the minister of Jesus Christ; he preached "the Gospel of God"; and he served in the power of the Holy Spirit of God who sanctified his ministry. **What is Paul's state of mind in accomplishing his task?**

1 Cor. 2:14-16 Eph. 3:6-8 Eph. 6:18-20 1 Thess. 2:9 1 Thess. 5:24

Romans 15:22-24

The apostle felt that it was in the line of the divine will that he should visit Rome, Rom. 1:10. Relying as he did on the efficacy of prayer, it is not surprising to find him urging his Roman friends to unite with him in asking, as in vv. 30-32, that his way may be made plain. The prayer was not answered quite as he expected. He little thought that he would come as a prisoner, bound to a soldier, and at the expense of the Roman Empire. Yet he came with joy, and found refreshment and rest with the beloved circle of disciples whom he enumerates in the following chapter. How little do most of us know of this striving in prayer! But how near we get to absent friends when we pray like this! "Strive together with me."

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Paul has been pouring out his heart regarding God's calling him to minister to the Gentiles, followed by his desire to go to Rome to visit the saints there, and his concern for the poor saints in Jerusalem. **As you have studied the Scripture concerning his traveling ministry, do you believe that it was all according to God's plan? Since he was not to preach where any other apostle had ministered, would you also agree that this is one evidence that Peter had not founded the churches at Rome—as has been falsely taught?**

Isa. 52:15 John 4:38 2 Cor. 11:26-27

Romans 15:25-33

"The love of the Spirit" is a very delightful phrase. It bears witness to the personality of the Holy Spirit, for love cannot be attributed to an influence. It also shows the confidence with which we may commit ourselves to His gracious indwelling and prompting. He is the *Holy Spirit*, but we need not shrink from Him as an awful guest. It also reminds us how deeply He may be grieved. There is no grief so poignant as that which is suffered by love.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Paul looked upon this offering as the paying of a debt. The Gentiles had received *spiritual* wealth from the Jews, and they now returned *material* wealth, paying their debt. Paul considered himself a "debtor" to the whole world (Rom. 1:14), and he also considered the Gentile Christians as debtors to the Jews, through whom they received the Word of God and the Son of God. **With respect to the special offering from the Gentile churches in Greece for the suffering Jewish saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1-9:15), did this practical relief help to unite Jews and Gentiles in the church?**

Romans 16:1-23

Here is a window into Paul's heart. He was apparently disowned by his own kindred, yet, as the Lord had promised, he had mothers, sisters, and brothers a hundred fold. What a contrast there is between the spirit of this chapter and that of the mere disputant or theologian, the Stoic or monk. We see also the courtesy, purity, thoughtfulness, and tenderness of Christian relationships.

Women are here—Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Persis, Julia, and others. The apostle realized the immense help that holy women could furnish in the ministry of the gospel. Men are here—old and young, fathers, brothers, and sons. Lovely titles are given with a lavish, though a discriminating hand—"succourer, helpers, beloved, approved in Christ, saints." How especially beautiful is the appellation, "the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord." The kiss was the common mode of greeting, but there was to be a new sanctity in it, as though Christ were between. This church in Rome was a model for other churches. Would that we could realize the same spiritual unity that presided over the gatherings of these early saints!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Individual Christians (under different denominations) in the Body of Christ worship God in varied ways and practices. **Is it possible for them to resolve these differences through the Holy Spirit's teaching and power and become one true, harmonious Body in Christ? Can we take any lessons from sheep, who need each other, and flock together for their own protection and blessing? (John chap. 10)**

Matt. 7:4-5 1 Cor. 1:10-13 1 Cor. 3:3 Gal. 4:10-11 Phil. 1:15-18 Phil. 2:1-4 Phil. 3:4-9 Col. 2:14-17 Col. 2:20-23 Col. 3:9-14 1 Thess. 5:11-15

Romans 16:24-27

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25).

During all the times of the Old Testament this mystery was comparatively kept secret in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, and the dark predictions of the prophets, which pointed at it, but so that they could not steadfastly look to the end of those things, 2 Cor. 3:13. Thus it was hid from ages and generations, even among the Jews, much more among the Gentiles that sat in darkness and had no notices at all of it. Even the disciples of Christ themselves, before His resurrection and ascension, were very much in the dark about the mystery of redemption, and their notion of it was very much clouded and confused; such a secret was it for many ages

(Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Matthew Henry)

Just what is the mystery which has been kept secret since the world began?

Rom. 8:14-17 Gal. 4:1-7 Eph. 1:7-14 Eph. 2:19-22 Eph. 3:1-21 Col. 1:12-23 Col. 4:3 1 Thess. 1:5 Heb. 1:1-2

Now that the mystery has been revealed to believers, what responsibility has been laid upon us?

Rom. 15:26 Eph. 2:10–Eph. 6:24