

ROMANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Though this epistle is in order placed the first of the epistles, yet it was not first written: there were several epistles written before it, as the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, the first epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus: the reason why this epistle stands first, is either the excellency of it, of which Chrysostom had so great an esteem that he caused it to be read over to him twice a week; or else the dignity of the place, where the persons lived to whom it is written, being Rome, the imperial city: so the books of the prophets are not placed in the same order in which they were written: Hosea prophesied as early as Isaiah, if not earlier; and before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and yet stands after them. This epistle was written from Corinth, as the subscription of it testifies; and which may be confirmed from the apostle's commendation of Phoebe, by whom he sent it, who was of Cenchræa, a place near Corinth; by his calling Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, who abode at Corinth, (~~2~~ Timothy 4:20), and Gaius his host, who was a Corinthian, (~~16~~ Romans 16:23) (~~1~~ Corinthians 1:14), though at what time it was written from hence, is not so evident: some think it was written in the time of his three months' travel through Greece, (~~20~~ Acts 20:2,3), a little before the death of the Emperor Claudius, in the year of Christ 55; others, that it was written by him in the short stay he made at Corinth, when he came thither, as is supposed, from Philippi, in his way to Troas, where some of his company went before, and had been there five days before him: and this is placed in the second year of Nero, and in the year of Christ 56; however, it was not written by him during his long stay at Corinth, when he was first there, but afterwards, even after he had preached from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum: and when he was about to go to Jerusalem, with the contributions of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to the poor saints there, (~~15~~ Romans 15:19,25,26). The persons to whom this epistle was sent were Roman saints, both Jews and Gentiles, inhabiting the city of Rome; of which city and church; (see Gill on "~~14~~ Acts 28:14"); (see Gill on "~~15~~ Acts 28:15"); by whom the Gospel was first preached at Rome, and who were the means of forming the church there, is not very evident

Irenaeus, an ancient writer, says ^{f1}, that Peter and Paul preached the Gospel at Rome, and founded the church; and Gaius, an ecclesiastical man, who lived in the time of Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, asserts the same; and Dionysius; bishop of the Corinthians, calls the Romans the plantation of Peter and Paul ^{f2}: whether Peter was ever at Rome is not a clear point with many; and certain it is, that the Apostle Paul had not been at Rome when he wrote this epistle, at least it seems very probable he had not, by several expressions in (~~510~~Romans 1:10-15); and yet here was a church to which he writes, and had been a considerable time; for their faith was spoken of throughout the world, (~~508~~Romans 1:8); and when the apostle was on the road to this city, the brethren in it met him, (~~425~~Acts 28:15). The chief design of this epistle is to set in a clear light the doctrine of justification: showing against the Gentiles, that it is not by the light of nature, and works done in obedience to that, and against the Jews, that it was not by the law of Moses, and the deeds of that; which he clearly evinces, by observing the sinful and wretched estate both of Jews and Gentiles: but that it is by the righteousness of Christ imputed through the grace of God, and received by faith; the effects of which are peace and joy in the soul, and holiness in the life and conversation: he gives an account of the justified ones, as that they are not without sin, which he illustrates by his own experience and case; and yet are possessed of various privileges, as freedom from condemnation, the blessing of adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; he treats in it concerning predestination, the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; and exhorts to the various duties incumbent on the saints, with respect to one another, and to the world, to duties of a moral and civil nature, and the use of things indifferent; and closes it with the salutations of divers persons.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, and salutation, the preface to it, and the grand proposition of justification by faith, so much enlarged on afterwards; and that this could not be by the law of nature, and the works of it among the Gentiles, is demonstrated by a detail of their horrible wickedness, impiety, and unrighteousness. In the inscription an account is given of the author of the epistle, who is described in (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:1) by his name Paul: by his relation to Christ, a servant of his; and by his office, an apostle, whose business and concern were with the Gospel; to which he was separated. This Gospel is commended from the author of it, who is God himself; and from the antiquity of it, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:2,3), being as ancient as the writings of the prophets; and from the subject of it, being the Lord Jesus Christ; who is described by his relation to God, his Son, by his dominion over the saints, their Lord, by both his natures, human and divine; his human nature, as being of the seed of David, his divine nature, being the Son of God, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:4), which is declared by the power he is possessed of, by the Spirit of holiness that is in him, by his resurrection from the dead, and by the apostles receiving from him grace to fit them for their office, and by the office itself: the end of which was to make some among all nations obedient to him, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:5), among whom were the saints at Rome, who were called by him, and after his name, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:6), which introduces the account of the persons to whom this epistle is written, who are described, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:7), by the place of their abode, Rome; by their interest in the love of God; and by the effect, fruit, and evidence of it, their effectual calling; and then follows the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, in which he wishes grace and peace for them, from God the Father, and from Christ. The preface begins (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:8), in which are a thanksgiving to God, through Christ, for all the saints at Rome, particularly on account of their faith, for which they were everywhere so famous; an appeal to God, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:9), for the truth of his incessant prayers for them, and particularly, (~~ROMANS~~ Romans 1:10), that this was a request he made, that if it was the will of God, he might have a speedy and prosperous

journey to, them; an expression of strong affection to them, and of his great desire to see them, ([Romans 1:11](#)), his end in which was partly for their sakes, to communicate spiritual things to them for their establishment, and partly for his own comfort, and the increase of the mutual faith of both, ([Romans 1:12](#)), also a vindication of himself, ([Romans 1:13](#)), showing, that it was not any fault of his, or any neglect of them by him, that he had not been with them as yet, but some things hindered him, in the execution of his purpose to come to them; to which he was moved, partly by the hope of having fruit among them, as among others, and partly through the obligation that lay upon him by virtue of his office, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men, ([Romans 1:14](#)), he expresses his willingness and readiness to preach the Gospel to them at Rome, as soon as an opportunity would offer, ([Romans 1:15](#)), which was his work and office, what he delighted in, was closely attached to, and by no means ashamed of, ([Romans 1:16](#)), partly because of the nature of it, it was the Gospel, good news and true: and partly because of the author and subject of it, Christ; as also because of the efficacy of it in the salvation of Jews and Gentiles; and likewise because of a principal doctrine revealed in it, ([Romans 1:17](#)), the doctrine of justification by faith, in the righteousness of Christ, confirmed and illustrated by a passage out of ([Habakkuk 2:4](#)), and which he particularly mentions, because he intended to dwell upon it in this epistle: and in order to show that the Gentiles could not be justified in the sight of God by their obedience to the law, and the light of nature, he observes, that they were the objects of the wrath of God, ([Romans 1:18](#)), and that very justly, because they sinned knowingly; they had some knowledge of the truth, but they would not profess it: and that they had such knowledge of it, he proves from the author of it, God, who showed it to them, ([Romans 1:19](#)), and from the means of it, by which they must, and did arrive to some degree of it, namely, the works of creation, ([Romans 1:20](#)). The apostle goes on to expose the ingratitude of them, the vanity of their minds, the pride and folly of their hearts, ([Romans 1:21,22](#)), the gross idolatry they were guilty of, ([Romans 1:23](#)), for which idolatry they were given up to their own hearts' lusts, to commit the foulest and most scandalous iniquities, even to commit sodomitical practices, and unnatural lusts, both men and women, ([Romans 1:24-28](#)). And so far were they from having a righteousness to justify them before God, that they were titled with all unrighteousness; and a large list of the vilest sins, being committed by them, is given; and a catalogue of the worst of sinners, as among them, ([Romans 1:29-32](#)).

All which are aggravated by their knowledge of the will of God, through the light of nature, that these things were contrary to it, and were deserving of death; and yet they both did them, and were delighted with those that committed them also: the inference which he leaves to be deduced from hence, and which may easily be deduced, is, that therefore there can be no justification of such persons in the sight of God by their own works.

Ver. 1. *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ*, etc..] The name of the author of this epistle is Paul, who formerly was called Saul. Some think his name was changed upon his own conversion; others, upon the conversion of the Roman deputy Sergius Paulus, (^{<4433>}Acts 13:7,9); others, that he was so called from the littleness of his stature; but rather it should seem that he had two names, which was usual with the Jews; one by which they went among the Gentiles, and another by they were called in their own land; (see Gill on "^{<4433>}Acts 13:9"). "A servant of Jesus Christ"; not a servant of sin, nor of Satan, nor of man, nor of Moses and his law, nor of the traditions of the elders, but of Jesus Christ; and not by creation only, but by redemption, and by powerful efficacious grace in conversion; which is no ways contrary to true liberty; nor a disgraceful, but a most honourable character; and which chiefly regards him as a minister of the Gospel:

called to be an apostle: an apostle was one that was immediately sent by Christ, and had his authority and doctrine directly from him, and had a power of working miracles from him, in confirmation of the truth of his mission, authority, and doctrine; all which were to be found in the author of this epistle, who did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour to himself, of which he always judged himself unworthy, but was "called" to it according to the will, and by the grace of God:

separated unto the Gospel of God. This may regard either God's eternal purpose concerning him, his preordination of him from eternity to be a preacher of the Gospel, to which he was separated from his mother's womb, (^{<4015>}Galatians 1:15); or the separation of him to that work made by the order of the Spirit of God, (^{<4433>}Acts 13:2). The phrase used is either in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were separated from their brethren the children of Israel, to their sacred employments; or rather to the apostle's having been **ϸωρπ**, "a Pharisee", which signifies "one separated", as he was now; only with this difference, before he was separated to the law, but now "to the Gospel", to preach and defend it, which he did with all faithfulness and integrity; the excellency of which Gospel is signified by

its being called “the Gospel of God”: he is the author of it; his grace is the subject of it; and he it is who commits it to men, qualifies them for the preaching of it, and succeeds them in it.

Ver. 2. *Which he had promised afore*, etc..] The Gospel is here further commended from the antiquity it: it was no novel doctrine, an upstart notion, but what God had conceived in his own breast from eternity. This mystery was hid in him from the beginning of the world, and was ordained before the world was; in time God was pleased to make it known to the sons of men; he “promised” it, he spoke of it, and declared it

by his prophets, Isaiah and others, “afore” the Apostle Paul was called forth to be a preacher of it; which promise, or promises of it, lie

in the Holy Scriptures; the books of the Old Testament, so called from the author, matter, and usefulness of them. The apostle speaks in the language of his nation, for the Jews frequently call the Bible, writings, Holy Ones; “for”, say they, *çdq µybwtk l k*, “all the Scriptures are holy”^{f3}, and style them, *çdqh ybtk*, “Scriptures of holiness”, or holy Scriptures^{f4}.

Ver. 3. *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, etc..] These words are in connection with “the Gospel of God”, (~~ROM~~Romans 1:1), and express the subject matter of it, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord; for Christ, as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the only Mediator between God and men, who is Lord both of the dead and living, is the sum and substance of the Gospel: he is here described by his relation to God, his Son, of the same nature with him, equal to him, and distinct from him; by his usual names, “Jesus Christ”, the one signifying a “Saviour”, the other “anointed”, and both, that he was anointed of God to be the Saviour of his people; and by his dominion over the saints our Lord, not merely by creation, but by redemption and grace, and happy is the person that can claim interest in him, as is here done; and by the distinction of natures in him:

which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; this respects Christ in his human nature, who was made flesh, and of a woman; and shows his existence before his incarnation, and the immediate power and hand of God in it; and which was done, not by transmutation of him into flesh, but by an assumption of human nature into union with his divine person: he is said to be made “of the seed of David”; this points out the family from whence he sprung; designs the posterity of David, particularly Mary; has regard to the promise made to David, which God fulfilled; and

shows the royal descent of Christ: it is added, “according to the flesh”; that is, according to his human nature; which phrase does not denote the corruption, but the truth of that nature; and supposes that he had another nature, otherwise there would have been no need of this limiting and restrictive clause.

Ver. 4. *And declared to be the Son of God*, etc..] Not made as he is said to be before, when his incarnation is spoken of; nor did he begin to be the Son of God, when he was made of the seed of David, but he, the Son of God, who existed as such, from everlasting, was manifested in the flesh, or human nature: and this his divine sonship, and proper deity, are declared and made evident,

with, or “by”

[his] power; which has appeared in the creation of all things out of nothing; in upholding all things in their beings; in the government of the world, and works of Providence; in the miracles he wrought; in his performing the great work of redemption; in the success of his Gospel, to the conversion of sinners; and in the preservation of his churches and people: here it seems chiefly to regard the power of Christ in raising the dead, since it follows, and which is to be connected with this clause,

by the resurrection from the dead; and designs either the resurrection of others, as of Lazarus, and some other persons, in his lifetime, and of some at his resurrection, and of all at the last day: or the resurrection of his own body, which dying he had power to raise up again, and did; and which declared him to be, or clearly made it appear that he was the Son of God, a divine person, truly and properly God: and this was done

according to the Spirit of holiness; which may be understood of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, who is holy in himself, and the author of holiness in the saints; and who is the declarer of Christ's sonship, partly by bearing a testimony to it in the word, and in the hearts of believers, and chiefly by being concerned in the resurrection of the body of Christ from the dead; or else by the Spirit of holiness may be meant the divine nature of Christ, which, as it is holy, so by it Christ offered himself to God, and by it was quickened, or made alive, when he had been put to death in the flesh; and which must be a clear and strong proof of his being truly the Son of God.

Ver. 5. *By whom we have received grace and apostleship*, etc..] That is, either by the Holy Spirit, from whom all grace and gifts come, qualifying for the discharge of any office; or by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, has received gifts for, and gives them to men to fit them for whatsoever service he is pleased to call them to. By “grace and apostleship” may be meant, either one and the same thing, the favour and honour of being the apostles of Christ; or different things, and the one in order to the other. Grace may design special saving grace in calling, justification, pardon, and adoption, and sanctification, which was received in common with other saints, and is absolutely necessary to an apostle, and to any ordinary minister of the word; or the doctrine of grace, which they received from Christ, and dispensed to others; or rather the gifts of grace, and the various measures thereof, which they received from their ascended Lord and King, by which they were furnished for apostleship, that is, the work and office of apostles; to which they were called by Christ, and from whom they received a commission to execute it. The apostle takes in others sides himself, and says, “we have received”; partly for the sake of modesty, and partly to keep up his equal title with others to this office; and since this is had in a way of receiving, which supposes giving, and excludes boasting, it obliges to make use of all grace and gifts to the glory of Christ, by whom they are received. The end for which they received such an office, and grace to fit them for it, was, “for obedience to the faith”; that men might be brought by the ministry of the word to obey the faith, Christ the object of faith; to submit to his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him, and to be subject to his ordinances or to obey the doctrine of faith, which is not barely to hear it, and notionally receive it, but to embrace it heartily by faith, and retain it, in opposition to a disbelief and contempt of it; and which is the end and design of the Gospel ministration to bring persons to, Moreover, by

obedience to the faith, or “obedience of faith”, as it may be rendered, may be meant the grace of faith, attended with evangelical obedience; for obedience, rightly performed, is only that which is by faith, and springs from it. Now grace and apostleship were received, in order to be exercised

among all nations; not in Judea only, to which the first commission of apostleship was limited, but in all the nations of the world, as the commission renewed by Christ after his resurrection ordered; and that some among all nations of the earth might, by the power of divine grace accompanying the word, be brought to faith and obedience: and all this, the

qualifications for the office, the due exercise of it in all the world, and the success that attended it, were

for his name; for the honour and glory of Christ, in whose name they went, and which they bore and carried among the Gentiles, out of whom he was pleased “to take a people for his name”, (~~415~~ Acts 15:14).

Ver. 6. *Among whom are ye also*, etc..] The Romans, though they were the chief, were among the nations of the world to whom the apostles were sent; and since Paul was called to be an apostle, and had, as others, grace and apostleship, and particularly the apostleship of the uncircumcision, or was ordained a teacher of the Gentiles, more especially he was an apostle to them, and as such was to be regarded by them. This seems to point out what they were originally; they were among all nations which lay in darkness; and were without Christ and hope, and God in the world; but now,

the called of Jesus Christ. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, or a mere external one by the ministry of the word, but an internal special call by the grace of God; and which is irresistible, efficacious, and unchangeable, and is an high, holy, and heavenly one; by it persons are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, from the company of the men of it, and the sinful pleasures thereof, to fellowship with Christ and his saints, and off a dependence on themselves, and their own righteousness, to the grace and righteousness of Christ, and to eternal glory. The persons so called are the elect of God, who are secured in Christ, and redeemed by him, and who has a concern with the Father and Spirit in the calling of them: hence they are styled, “the called of Jesus Christ”; they are called by him, and after his name; he has an interest in them; as they were before his chosen and redeemed ones, they are now his called ones; as Jacob and Israel of old were named of God, *yaʾaqm*, “my called”, (~~2382~~ Isaiah 48:12); so these were named Christ's called ones; and who by calling came to be partakers of him and of his grace.

Ver. 7. *To all that be in Rome*, etc..] These words contain both the inscription of the epistle, and the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, The inscription of it is not to the Roman emperor; nor to the Roman senate, nor to all the inhabitants in Rome; but to all the saints there,

whether rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, Jew or Gentile, without any distinction, being all one in Christ Jesus: and these are described as

beloved of God; not for any loveliness there was in them, nor because of any love in them to God, nor on account of their obedience and righteousness; but through the free favour and sovereign will and pleasure of God, who loved them before he called them, even from eternity, and will love them to eternity; which love of his is the source and spring of all the blessings of grace, and, among the rest, of the effectual calling: hence this character is set before the following one,

called [to be] saints; not born so, nor become so through their own power, but were so by calling grace, as a fruit of everlasting love; men are first beloved of the Lord, and then called to be his saints. The salutation follows; the things wished for in it are,

grace to you, and peace: by “grace” is not meant ministerial gifts, which are not common to all the saints; nor the Gospel, which was at Rome already; nor the love and favour of God, which these persons were sharers in, as appears from their above characters; nor the principle of grace, which was now formed there in their effectual calling; but an increase of grace, as to its degrees, acts, and exercise; every grace is imperfect in this respect, and those who have the most stand in need of more; there is such a thing as growing in grace, which is very desirable, and may be expected from God, who is able to make all grace to abound, and has promised to give more: by “peace” is meant, peace with God through Christ; peace in their own consciences, and with one another; all manner of prosperity inward and outward here, and eternal happiness hereafter. The persons from whom these are desired are,

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; God the Father of Christ is spoken of as our Father, which is by adoption; partly to engage fear and reverence of him at his throne; and partly to encourage freedom and boldness there, and an expectation of receiving every blessing of grace from him: “the Lord Jesus Christ” is mentioned, as being the person through whom, and for whose sake, all the blessings of grace and peace are communicated to us; and being put upon a level with the Father in these petitions, shows him to be equal with him, and so truly and properly God. “Grace” may be thought to be particularly wished for from the Father, though not exclusive of Christ, since he is the God of all grace, who has treasured up a fulness of it in his Son. And “peace” may be considered as

desired to be had from Christ, though not exclusive of the Father; since the covenant of peace was made with him, the chastisement of peace was laid on him, and he has made peace by the blood of his cross, and is the giver of it to his people.

Ver. 8. *First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all,* etc..]

After the inscription and salutation, follows a thanksgiving, which begins the epistle: it is usual with the apostle in all his epistles to make requests for the churches, with thanksgivings for mercies; his view in it was, to glorify God, to testify his affection to the saints, and to show that all they had must be referred to the grace of God. The object of thanksgiving is God not merely as a creator and preserver, but as a Father, the Father of Christ, and our Father in Christ; as the one God, and our God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The apostle styles him, my God; which distinguishes him from all others, points out his particular interest in him, expresses his knowledge of him and faith in him, and demonstrates that what he did now, he did in faith. The person through whom thanks are given is Jesus Christ. There is no coming to God but through Christ, nor is any sacrifice either of prayer or praise acceptable without him, and since all we have come through him, it is but reasonable that thanks for them should be returned by and through him; the persons for whom this thanksgiving is made were all the Romans, all the saints at Rome, the members of the church there, of whatsoever rank and degree, and in whatsoever, state and condition; the thing for which the apostle was thankful for particularly was, not that their city was mistress of the whole world, and their fame for power, wealth, and grandeur, was spread abroad far and near; but, says he,

that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world; which shows that faith is a grace of great account: God has put an honour upon it, by making it the receiver of all his gifts, and that gives glory to God, and without it nothing is acceptable to him; it answers many excellent uses and purposes in experience; it is that by which saints live upon Christ in this world, and look to the glories of another. This also shows that the saints at Rome did not hide their faith in their breasts, but declared it to others; a public profession both of the grace and doctrine of faith is to be made, and constantly held; both are to be shown forth to others, by deeds as well as words; which greatly redounds to the honour of such churches, causes joy in other churches, and in all the ministers of the Gospel, and is the occasion of many thanksgivings to God.

Ver. 9. *For God is my witness, whom I serve,* etc..] These words are an appeal to God, and carry in them the nature and form of an oath; the reason of the apostle's using it was, because he was personally unknown to the Romans, and they to him, and so might doubt of his affectionate regard unto them; and therefore for the confirmation thereof he uses it: this was a case which was only known to God and himself, and hence he appeals to him for the truth of it. The object of his oath or appeal, or by which he speaks, is not himself, or anything that belonged to him, nor any creature in heaven or on earth, but God; who in a solemn oath is only to be appealed to and sworn by: he describes him as the God “whom [he] served”, to distinguish him from all false gods, and to show that he that takes an oath, should be one that fears and serves the Lord; what he served him in was not the law, but

the Gospel of his Son; Jesus Christ, who is the author, minister, and subject matter of it: he served him in it, by preaching, spreading, and defending it. This is a service, and a very laborious one, and makes for the honour and glory of God. The manner in which he served him was, as he says,

with my Spirit; either with the Spirit of God, which was given to him; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews; internally, in opposition to bodily exercise only, and voluntarily, with his whole heart, soul, and spirit. The matter or substance of his appeal or oath was,

that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; whence may be observed, that prayer to God ought to be constant; and that we should be concerned for others as well as for ourselves; all the saints should share therein.

Ver. 10. *Making request, if by any means now at length,* etc..] A principal thing, which he incessantly and importunately requested at the throne of grace, was, that he might have an opportunity of coming to them; that God in his providence would open a way for him; and that he might have a safe and comfortable journey in a very little time; all which he submits to the will of God, as a good man ought to do; and which he thus expresses,

I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God, to come unto you; (see ^{SOAB}James 4:13,14).

Ver. 11. *For I long to see you,* etc..] Not the city of Rome, which was one of Austin's three wishes to have seen in its glory; nor the emperor of it, nor

the senate in it, nor its populous inhabitants, fine buildings, riches and grandeur; but the poor saints there, which were the excellent men of the earth, of the whole Roman empire, and in whom was his delight: his desire to see them was not to gratify his curiosity, nor to spend his time in idle chat with them, nor with a view to enrich himself by them; but, says he,

that I may impart some spiritual gift: not any extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but spiritual light, knowledge, peace, and comfort, through the exercise of his ministerial gift: whence it may be observed, that that which qualifies men for the preaching of the word to the profit of others, is a gift, a gift by grace; a spiritual one, which comes from the Spirit of God, and may be, and is to be imparted to others in the free use and exercise of it; and that,

to the end that saints may be established; for such who are called by grace, need establishing. They are indeed in a safe state and condition; they are encircled in the arms of everlasting love, they are fixed in the hands of Christ, secured in an everlasting covenant, established on the rock of ages, and settled in a state from whence they can never fall: yet, notwithstanding this, they are sometimes very unstable in their hearts, in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, and in professing and adhering to the doctrines of the Gospel; wherefore they need establishing, as to a more firm persuasion of interest in the love of God, and in the covenant of grace, as to a more stable exercise of grace in Christ, and as to a more constant discharge of duty, and steady profession of adherence to the truths of the Gospel; to all which the ministration of the word has a tendency, with a divine blessing.

Ver. 12. *That is, that I may be comforted together with you,* etc..] This is a further explanation of his view, in being desirous of coming to them, and preaching: the Gospel among them; for what makes for establishment, makes for comfort; and what makes for comfort, makes for establishment; and when souls are established, ministers are comforted as well as they; and whilst ministers are imparting their spiritual gifts for the use of others, they themselves are sometimes comforted of God in their work, and particularly when they find there is an agreement between their doctrine, and the experience of the saints:

by the mutual faith both of you and me. The grace of faith is the same in all the saints, and so is the doctrine of it, as dispensed by Christ's faithful ministers, and experimentally received and embraced by his people; the

consideration of which has a very great influence on the comfort and establishment of each other; nor are any so perfect, but they may receive benefit from others, even though inferior to them.

Ver. 13. *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren,* etc..] The apostle calls them brethren, because many of them were Jews, his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, and all of them were his brethren in a spiritual relation; and this he does to express his affection to them, and engage their attention and credit to him, and particularly to this matter which he now acquaints them with, being unwilling they should be ignorant of it;

that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you: it was not a sudden start of mind, or a desire that lately arose up in him, but a settled resolution and determination, and which he had often made:

but was let hitherto; either by God, who had work for him to do in other places; or by Satan, who sometimes by divine permission has had such power and influence; (see ^{¹ Thessalonians 2:18), or through the urgent necessities of other churches, which required his stay with them longer than he intended: his end in taking up at several times such a resolution of coming to them was, says he,}

that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles: by fruit he means, not any reward of his labour, either temporal or eternal; but the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, and the fruitfulness of believers in grace and works. The apostle seems to allude to the casting of seed into the earth: Christ's ministers' are husbandmen, who sow the seed of the word, which lies some time under the clods; wherefore patience is necessary to wait its springing up, first in the blade, and then in the ear, then in the full corn in the ear, when it brings forth fruit; all which depend on the blessing of God: and when he adds, "as among other Gentiles", his design is not so much to let them know that they were as other Gentiles, upon a level with them, had no pre-eminence as citizens of Rome, over other saints, being all one in Christ Jesus; as to observe to them his success in other places, where he had been preaching the Gospel of the grace of God.

Ver. 14. *I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians,* etc..] The meaning is, that he was obliged by the call he had from God, the injunction that was laid upon him by him, and the gifts with which he was

qualified, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men; who are here distinguished into Greeks and Barbarians: sometimes by Greeks are meant the Gentiles in general, in opposition to the Jews; (see ~~6016~~Romans 1:16); but here they design only a part of the Gentiles, the inhabitants of Greece, in opposition to all the world besides; for the Greeks used to call all others that were not of themselves Barbarians^{f5}: or else by Greeks are meant the more cultivated nations of the world, and by Barbarians the ruder and more uncivil parts of it; to which agrees the next division of mankind,

both to the wise and to the unwise. The Gospel was to be preached “to the wise”; such who thought themselves to be so, and were so with respect to human wisdom and knowledge; though it should be despised by them, as it was, and though few of them were called by it, some were, and still are, though not many; and such wisdom there is in the Gospel, as the wisest of men may learn by it, will be entertaining to them, is far beyond their contempt, and what will serve to exercise their talents and abilities, to search into the knowledge of, and rightly to understand; and it must be preached “to the unwise”; for such God has chosen to confound the wise; these he calls by his grace, and reveals his Gospel to, whilst he hides it from the wise and prudent; and there is that in the Gospel which is plain and easy to the weakest mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God.

Ver. 15. *So, as much as in me is, I am ready,* etc..] This explains what he was a debtor to one and another for, namely,

to preach the Gospel; expresses the readiness of his mind to that work, whatever difficulties lay in his way; and declares what a willing mind he had to preach it also to the Romans, as elsewhere:

to you that are at Rome also; the metropolis of the Roman empire, a very public place, the seat of Satan, and where was the heat of persecution.

Ver. 16. *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,* etc..] The reason why he was so ready and willing to preach it, even where he ran the greatest risk of his character and life, was, because it was “the Gospel of Christ” he preached, and he was not ashamed of it. This supposes that some were, though the apostle was not, ashamed of the Gospel; as all such are who hide and conceal it, who have abilities to preach it, and do not: or who preach, but not the Gospel; or who preach the Gospel only in part, who own that in private, they will not preach in public, and use ambiguous words, of doubtful signification, to cover themselves; who blend the

Gospel with their own inventions, seek to please men, and live upon popular applause, regard their own interest, and not Christ's, and cannot bear the reproach of his Gospel. It expresses, that the apostle was not ashamed of it; that is, to preach it, which he did fully and faithfully, plainly and consistently, openly and publicly, and boldly, in the face of all opposition: and it designs more than is expressed, as that he had the utmost value for it, and esteemed it his highest honour that he was employed in preaching it: his reasons for this were, because it was "the Gospel of Christ"; which Christ himself preached, which he had learnt by revelation from him, and of which he was the sum and substance: and because

it is the power of God; not essentially, but declaratively; as the power of God is seen in making men ministers of it, in the doctrines held forth in it, in the manner in which it was spread in the world, in the opposition it met with, in the continuance and increase of it notwithstanding the power and cunning of men, and in the shortness of time, in which so much good was done by it in the several parts of the world: it is the power of God organically or instrumentally; as it is a means made use of by God in quickening dead sinners, enlightening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, softening hard hearts, and making of enemies friends; to which add, the manner in which all this is done, suddenly, secretly, effectually, and by love, and not force: the extent of this power is,

unto salvation; the Gospel is a declaration and revelation of salvation by Christ, and is a means of directing and encouraging souls to lay hold upon it. The persons to whom it is so, are in general,

everyone that believeth: this does not suppose that faith gives the Gospel its virtue and efficacy; but is only descriptive of the persons to whom the Gospel, attended with the power and grace of God, is eventually efficacious: and particularly it was so,

to the Jew first; who as they had formerly the advantage of the Gentiles, much every way, through the peculiar privileges which were conferred on them; so the Gospel was first preached to them by Christ and his disciples; and even when it was ordered to be carried into the Gentile world, it was to begin with them, and became effectual for the salvation of many of them:

and also to the Greek; to the Gentile; for after the Jews had rejected it, as many being called by it as Jehovah thought fit, at that time, it was preached

to the Gentiles with great success; which was the mystery hid from ages and generations past, but now made manifest.

Ver. 17. *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed*, etc..] By “the righteousness of God”, is not meant the essential righteousness of God, the rectitude of his nature, his righteousness in fulfilling his promises, and his punitive justice, which though revealed in the Gospel, yet not peculiar to it; nor the righteousness by which Christ himself is righteous, either as God, or as Mediator; but that righteousness which he wrought out by obeying the precepts, and bearing the penalty of the law in the room of his people, and by which they are justified in the sight of God: and this is called “the righteousness of God”, in opposition to the righteousness of men: and because it justifies men in the sight of God; and because of the concern which Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have in it. Jehovah the Father sent his Son to work it out, and being wrought out, he approves and accepts of it, and imputes it to his elect: Jehovah the Son is the author of it by his obedience and death; and Jehovah the Spirit discovers it to sinners, works faith in them to lay hold upon it, and pronounces the sentence of justification by it in their consciences. Now this is said to be “revealed” in the Gospel, that is, it is taught in the Gospel; that is the word of righteousness, the ministration of it; it is manifested in and by the Gospel. This righteousness is not known by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses; it was hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law, and is brought to light only by the Gospel; it is hid from every natural man, even from the most wise and prudent, and from God's elect themselves before conversion, and is only made known to believers, to whom it is revealed:

from faith to faith; that is, as say some, from the faith of God to the faith of men; from the faith of preachers to the faith of hearers; from the faith of the Old to the faith of the New Testament saints; or rather from one degree of faith to another; for faith, as it grows and increases, has clearer sights of this righteousness, as held forth in the Gospel. For the proof of this, a passage of Scripture is cited,

as it is written, (^{<small>SMD</small>}Habakkuk 2:4);

the just shall live by faith: “a just”, or righteous man is, not everyone who thinks himself, or is thought by others to be so; nor are any so by their obedience to the law of works; but he is one that is made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, which is before said to be revealed in the Gospel. The life which this man lives, and “shall live”, does not

design a natural or corporeal life, and a continuance of that, for such die a natural death, as other men; nor an eternal life, for though they shall so live, yet not by faith; but a spiritual life, a life of justification on Christ, of holiness from him, of communion with him, and of peace and joy; which spiritual life shall be continued, and never be lost. The manner in which the just lives, is “by faith”. In the prophet Habakkuk, the words are, “the just shall live” *wtnwmab*, “by his faith” (~~<3104>~~Habakkuk 2:4)); which the Septuagint render, “by my faith”: and the apostle only reads, “by faith”, omitting the affix, as well known, and easy to be supplied: for faith, when given by God, and exercised by the believer, is his own, and by it he lives; not upon it, but by it upon Christ the object of it; from whom, in a way of believing, he derives his spiritual life, and all the comforts of it.

Ver. 18. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven*, etc..] The apostle having hinted at the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and which he designed more largely to insist upon in this epistle, and to prove that there can be no justification of a sinner in the sight of God by the deeds of the law, in order to set this matter in a clear light, from hence, to the end of the chapter, and in the following ones, represents the sad estate and condition of the Gentiles with the law of nature, and of the Jews with the law of Moses; by which it most clearly appears, that neither of them could be justified by their obedience to the respective laws under which they were, but that they both stood in need of the righteousness of God. By “the wrath of God” is meant the displicency and indignation of God at sin and sinners; his punitive justice, and awful vengeance; the judgments which he executes in this world; and that everlasting displeasure of his, and wrath to come in another world, which all through sin are deserving of, some are appointed to, God's elect are delivered from, through Christ's sustaining it, in their room and stead, and which comes and abides on all impenitent and unbelieving persons. This is said to be “revealed”, where? not in the Gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed; unless the Gospel be taken for the books of the four Evangelists, or for the Gospel dispensation, or for that part of the ministry of a Gospel preacher, which represents the wrath of God as the desert of sin, the dreadfulfulness of it, and the way to escape it; for the Gospel, strictly taken, is grace, good news, glad tidings, and not wrath and damnation; though indeed in Christ's sufferings for the sins of his people, which the Gospel gives us an account of, there is a great display of the wrath of God, and of his indignation against sin: but this wrath of God is revealed in the

law, it is known by the light of nature, and to be perceived in the law of Moses, and may be observed in the Scriptures, where are many instances and examples of divine wrath and displeasure; as in the total destruction of the old world by a world wide flood, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, the plagues of Egypt, and the several instances mentioned in this chapter. This wrath is said to be God's wrath "from heaven", by the awful blackness which covers the heavens, the storms and tempests raised in them, and by pouring down water or fire in a surprising manner, on the inhabitants of the world; or "from heaven", that is, openly, manifestly, in the sight of all; or from God who is in heaven, and not from second causes; and more especially it will be revealed from heaven, when Christ shall descend from thence at the day of judgment: the subject matter or object of it,

against, or "upon" which it is revealed, are,

all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men; that is, all ungodly and unrighteous men; or all men who are guilty of ungodliness, the breach of the first table of the law, which respects the worship of God, and of unrighteousness, the breach of the second table of the law, which regards our neighbours' good: and these persons are further described as such,

who hold the truth in unrighteousness: meaning either such who know the Gospel, which is "the truth", and do not profess it openly, but hold and imprison it in their minds, which is a great piece of unrighteousness; or if they do profess it, do not live up to it in their lives: or rather the Gentile philosophers are designed, who are spoken of in the following verse; (see Gill on "⁴¹¹²Romans 1:22"); who had some knowledge of the truth of the divine Being, and his perfections, and of the difference between moral good and evil; but did not like to retain it themselves, nor communicate all they knew to others, nor did they live according to that knowledge which they had.

Ver. 19. *Because that which may be known of God*, etc..] There are some things which could not be known of God by the light of nature; as a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the knowledge of God in Christ as Mediator; the God-man and Mediator Jesus Christ; his incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection; the will of God to save sinners by a crucified Jesus; the several peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, particularly the resurrection of the dead, and the manner of worshipping of God with acceptance: but then there are some things which may be known of God, without a revelation.

Adam had a perfect knowledge of him; and his sons, though fallen, even the very Heathens have some notion of him, as that there is a God; and by the light of nature it might be known that there is but one God, who is glorious, full of majesty, and possessed of all perfections, as that he is all powerful, wise, good and righteous: and this

is manifest in them, or “to them”; by the light that is given them: it is light by which that which may be known of God is manifest; and this is the light of nature, which every man has that comes into the world; and this is internal, it is in him, in his mind and conscience, and is communicated to him by God, and that by infusion or inspiration; (see ~~xxx~~ Job 32:8);

for God hath showed [it] unto them; what may be known of him by that light; and which is assisted and may be improved by a consideration of the works of creation and Providence.

Ver. 20. *For the invisible things of him*, etc..] Not the angels, the invisible inhabitants of heaven: nor the unseen glories of another world; nor the decrees of God; nor the persons in the Godhead; but the perfections of God, or his “properties”, as the Arabic version reads it; and which are explained by “his eternal power and Godhead”: these,

from the creation of the world are clearly seen; this is no new discovery, but what men have had, and might, by the light of nature, have enjoyed ever since the world was created; these

being understood, in an intellectual way, by the discursive faculty of the understanding,

by the things that are made; the various works of creation; all which proclaim the being, unity, and perfections of God their Creator,

so that they are without excuse; the very Heathens, who have only the light of nature, and are destitute of a revelation, have no colour or pretext for their idolatrous practices, and vicious lives; nor have they, nor will they have anything to object to God's righteous judgment against them, or why they should not be condemned.

Ver. 21. *Because that when they knew God*, etc..] Though they had such a knowledge of the being and perfections of God, yet

they glorified him not as God. They neither thought nor spoke honourably of him; nor did they ascribe those perfections to him, which belonged to

him; they did not adhere to him as the one and only God, nor honour him as the Creator of all things out of nothing, and as the sole Governor of the universe; they did not glorify him by the internal exercise of fear of him, love to him, or trust in him, nor by any external worship suitable to his nature, and their own notions of him, Seneca is an instance of this, of whom Austin^{f6} says,

“that he worshipped what he found fault with, did what he improved, and adored that which he blamed.”

Neither were thankful; neither for the knowledge of things they had, which they ascribed to themselves; nor for their mercies, which they imputed to second causes:

but became vain in their imaginations; the vanity or their minds was the spring and source of their evil conduct; which may design the wickedness of their hearts, and the imaginations thereof, which were evil, and that continually; the pride of their natures the carnality and weakness of their reasonings, and the whole system of their vain philosophy; and hence they ran into polytheism, or the worshipping of many gods:

and their foolish heart was darkened; where they thought their great wisdom lay: darkness is natural to the hearts and understandings of all men, which is increased by personal iniquity; Satan is concerned in improving it, and God sometimes gives up the hearts of persons to judicial blindness, which was the case of these men.

Ver. 22. *Professing themselves to be wise*, etc.] The learned men among the Gentiles first called themselves σοφοι, “Sophi”, wise men: and afterwards, to cover their wretched pride and vanity, φιλοσοφοι, “Philosophers”, lovers of wisdom; but notwithstanding all their arrogance, their large pretensions to wisdom, and boast of it

they became fools; they appeared to be so; they showed themselves to be such in those very things they prided themselves with the knowledge of: as, for instance, Socrates, after he had asserted the unity of God, and is said to die a martyr for the truth; yet one of the last actions of his life was sacrificing a cock to Aesculapius, at least he desired his friend Crito to do it.

Ver. 23. *And changed the glory of the incorruptible God*, etc..] God is incorruptible and immortal in his nature, and so is opposed to all

corruptible creatures and things: he has a glory which is essential to him, and a manifestative one in the creatures, and which is relative, and of right belongs to him: his absolute essential glory cannot be changed, cannot be taken away from him, nor given to another; but his relative glory may be said to be changed, when another is worshipped in his stead, and called by his name. So Philo the Jew^{f7} speaks of

“some, who, leaving the true God, make to themselves false ones, and impose the name of the eternal and incorruptible upon created and corruptible beings.”

Into an image made like to corruptible man; which was worshipped in different forms by the several nations of the world:

and to birds; as the dove by the Samaritans, the hawk, the ibis, and others by the Egyptians:

and fourfooted beasts; as the ox, and other creatures:

and creeping things; such as beetles, serpents, and others, by the same.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness*, etc..] Not by putting any into them, but by leaving them to the pollution of their nature; by withdrawing his providential restraints from them, and by giving them up to judicial hardness:

through the lusts of their own hearts. The heart of man is the source of all wickedness; the lusts that dwell there are many, and these tend to uncleanness of one sort or another: by it here is meant particularly bodily uncleanness, since it is said they were given up

to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; either alone, or with others; so that as they changed the glory of God, and dishonoured him, he left them to dishonour themselves by doing these things which were reproachful and scandalous to human nature.

Ver. 25. *Who changed the truth of God into a lie*, etc..] Not the truth of the Gospel, which they were unacquainted with; but that which might be known of God as true, and was known of them by the light of nature; or the true God himself, whom they “changed into a lie”; by ascribing to false deities, which were lying vanities, those things which were known of God; and by worshipping them instead of him: for they

worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; or “above him” or “against him”, in opposition to him, or “besides him”, others along with him; or neglecting him, and not worshipping him at all; which is aggravated in that what they worshipped was a creature, either of their own, or of God's making, and whom they neglected was the Creator of them:

who is blessed for ever, Amen; is blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to his creatures; which is so glaring a truth, that everyone ought to say and set his “Amen” to it.

Ver. 26. *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections*, etc..] Because of their idolatrous practices, God left them to very dishonourable actions, sodomitical ones, both among the men and women:

for even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; either by prostituting themselves to, and complying with the “sodomitical” embraces of men, in a way that is against nature^{f8}; or by making use of such ways and methods with themselves, or other women, to gratify their lusts, which were never designed by nature for such an use: of these vicious women, and their practices, Seneca^{f9} speaks, when he says,

“libidine veto nec maribus quidem cedunt, pati natae; Dii illas Deoque, male perdant; adeo perversum commentae, genus impudicitiae, viros ineunt:”

also Clemens Alexandrinus^{f10} has respect to such, saying,

“γυναικες ανδριζονται παρα φυσιν, γαμου μεν αι τε και γαμουσαι γυναικες”

and such there were among the Jews, whom they call *wzb wz twl l wsmj mʿʿn*^{f11}, and whom the priests were forbidden to marry.

Ver. 27. *And likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the women*, etc..] The very sin of “sodomy” is here designed, so called from Sodom, the place where we first hear of it, (^{<0195>}Genesis 19:5), the men of which place, because they

burned in their lust one towards another, as these Gentiles are said to do, God rained upon them fire and brimstone from heaven: an exceeding great

sin this is, contrary to nature, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a people and nation among whom it prevails, as it did very much in the Gentile world, and among their greatest philosophers; even those that were most noted for moral virtue are charged with it, as Socrates, Plato, Zeno, and others^{f12}: it is a sin which generally prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Pagans of old, and among the Papists and Mahometans now; and never was it so rife in this nation as since the schemes of deism and infidelity have found such a reception among us. Thus God, because men dishonour him with their evil principles and practices, leaves them to reproach their own nature, and dishonour their own bodies:

men with men working that which is unseemly; and of which nothing like it is to be observed in the brutal world:

receiving in themselves the recompence of their error, which was meet: God punishes sin with sin; for as the Jews say^{f13}, as

“one commandment draws on another, so one transgression draws on another; for the reward of the commandment is the commandment, **hryb[hryb[rkçw** and the reward of transgression is transgression.”

Ver. 28. *And even as they did not like*, etc.] This accounts for the justness of the divine procedure in leaving them to commit such scandalous iniquities; that since they had some knowledge of God by the light of nature, and yet did not care

to retain God in [their] knowledge; or to own and acknowledge him as God, to worship and glorify him as such; but took every method to erase this knowledge out of their minds, and keep it from others:

God gave them over to a reprobate mind; a vain empty mind, worthless, good for nothing devoid of all true knowledge and judgment; incapable of approving what is truly good, or of disapproving that which is evil; a mind that has lost all conscience of things, and is disapproved of by God, and all good men:

to do those things which are not convenient; which are neither agreeably to the light of nature, nor convenient to, or becoming the honour of human nature; things which the brutes themselves, who are destitute of reason, do not do.

Ver. 29. *Being filled with all unrighteousness*, etc..] From hence, to the end of the chapter, follows a large and black list and catalogue of the sad characters of the Gentiles, and of the best men they had among them; for the apostle is all along speaking, not of the common people, but of their wise professors, and moral instructors; than which there never was a more wicked set of men that ever lived upon the face of the earth; who under the guise of morality were guilty of the greatest pride and covetousness, and of the most filthy debaucheries imaginable: they were “filled with all unrighteousness”. This word includes in it all manner of sin and wickedness in general; fitly expresses the condition of fallen men, destitute of a righteousness; designs every violation of the law respecting our neighbour; and is opposed to that vain conceit of righteousness which these men had: particular branches of it follow; as,

fornication; which sometimes includes adultery and an unchastity; simple fornication was not reckoned a sin among the Gentiles:

wickedness; or mischief, which intends not so much the internal wickedness of the heart, as that particular vice, by which a man is inclined and studies to do hurt, to others, as Satan does:

covetousness; this may intend every insatiable lust, and particularly the sin which goes by this name, and is the root of all evil, and was a reigning sin among the Gentiles. Seneca, the famous moralist, was notoriously guilty of this vice, being one of the greatest usurers that ever lived:

maliciousness; the word denotes either the iniquity of nature in which men are conceived and born; or that desire of revenge in men, for which some are very notorious:

envy; at the superior knowledge and learning, wealth and riches, happiness, and outward prosperity of others:

murder: which sometimes arose from envy, wherefore they are put together. There is an elegant “paranomasia” in the Greek text:

debate; strife about words more than things, and more for vain glory, and a desire of victory, than for truth:

deceit; through their empty notions of philosophy; hence “philosophy and vain deceit” go together, (⁵¹¹⁸Colossians 2:8); making large pretences to morality, when they were the vilest of creatures:

malignity; moroseness; having no courteousness nor affability in them, guilty of very ill manners; as particularly they were who were of the sect of the Cynics. Now they are said to be “filled with”, and “full of”, these things; not filled by God, but by Satan and themselves; and it denotes the aboundings of wickedness in them, and which was insatiable. The apostle goes on to describe them, as

whisperers; who made mischief among friends, by privately suggesting, and secretly insinuating things into the mind of one to the prejudice of another.

Ver. 30. *Backbiters*, etc..] Who more publicly defamed the characters of their neighbours, and hurt their good name, credit and reputation, though behind their backs:

haters of God; some read it, “hated of God”; as all workers of iniquity are; but rather this expresses their sin, that they were deniers of the being and providence of God, and showed themselves to be enemies to him by their evil works:

despiteful; both by opprobrious words, and injurious actions:

proud; of their natural knowledge, learning, eloquence and vain philosophy:

boasters: of their parts, abilities, wisdom and works; all which they attributed to themselves, and to the sharpness of their wit, their sagacity and industry:

inventors of evil things; of evil schemes of morality and philosophy, and of evil practices, as well as principles:

disobedient to parents; which was acting contrary to the light of nature.

Ver. 31. *Without understanding*, etc..] Of God, of his nature and worship, of things divine and even moral, being given up to a reprobate mind:

covenant breakers; had no regard to private or public contracts:

without natural affection; to their parents, children, relations and friends:

implacable; when once offended there was no reconciling of them:

unmerciful; had no pity and compassion to persons in distress.

Ver. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God*, etc..] Either of the law of God, the law and light of nature, by which they might in some measure know the difference between good and evil, and what was right and wrong; or the judiciary sentence of God against sin:

that they which commit such things are worthy of death; at least of corporeal death:

not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them; all which greatly aggravated their wickedness, since they sinned against light and knowledge, with approbation and good liking of their own sins, and took pleasure in the sins of others. The Jews have a saying ^{f14},

“that no man is suspected of a thing but he has done it; and if he has not done the whole of it, he has done part of it, and if he has not done part of it, he has thought in his heart to do it, and if he has not thought in his heart to do it, *j mçw wç [ç µyrj a har*, “he has seen others do it, and has rejoiced”.”

And if such a man is a wicked man, how much more wicked are such who commit sin themselves, and delight in the sins of others? now from this whole account we see the insufficiency of the light of nature to guide persons in the way of salvation; what need there was of a divine revelation; and how impossible it is that such men should ever be justified before God, by any works of seeming righteousness done by them; which the apostle had in view, in giving this account of the depraved nature and conduct of the Gentiles, and of those among them who professed to be, and were the wisest and most knowing of them.