

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 7

The Apostle, in this chapter, discourses concerning the freedom of justified and regenerated persons from the law, and concerning the nature, use, and excellency of it; in which he removes several objections to it, and gives an account from his own experience of the struggle and combat there is between flesh and spirit in a regenerate person; and which shows, that though believers are justified from sin, yet still sin remains in them, and is the complaint of their souls. Whereas he had in (~~ROM~~Romans 6:14), of the preceding chapter, asserted that believers are not under the law, but under grace: he knew that this would be matter of offence to the believing Jews, who still retained an high opinion of the law; wherefore he takes it up in the beginning of this chapter, and explains his meaning, and shows in what sense justified ones are delivered from it; and first observes a known maxim, which everyone, especially such as know anything of the nature of laws, must allow of; that the law has power over a man as long as he lives, and no longer, (~~ROM~~Romans 7:1), and then particularly instances in the law of marriage, (~~ROM~~Romans 7:2), which is in force as long as both parties live and no longer: during the husband's life the wife is bound, but when dead she is loosed, and which is further explained, (~~ROM~~Romans 7:3), that should she marry another while her husband is alive, she would be an adulteress; but he being dead, should she marry, she is liable to no such imputation: this the apostle accommodates, (~~ROM~~Romans 7:4), to the case of the law, and the saints' deliverance from it, in which he asserts that they are dead to the law, and that to them, as in (~~ROM~~Romans 7:6), by the body of Christ; and therefore the law could have no dominion over them, as is the case of all laws when men are dead; and so they might be lawfully married to another, to bring forth fruit to God, according to the particular law of marriage. This is illustrated by the different state and condition of God's elect, before and after conversion; whilst in an unconverted state the law irritates indwelling sin, and the lusts of it, and by the members of the body operates to the bringing forth the deadly fruit of sin, (~~ROM~~Romans 7:5), but when delivered from the irritating power of the law, that being dead in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ, they are both in a

capacity, and under an obligation to serve the Lord, in a new and spiritual manner, (^{<8106>}Romans 7:6), and whereas he had said that the motions of sin are stirred up by the law, (^{<8105>}Romans 7:5), he saw that an objection might be raised against the law, as if that was sinful; this he removes by expressing his abhorrence of such a thought, by pointing out the law as that which makes known sin, and by the experience he himself had of it, making known indwelling sin to him, (^{<8107>}Romans 7:7), when he goes on to give an account of the workings of corrupt nature in him, under the prohibition of the law; how it was with him before it entered into his conscience, and how it was with him afterwards; that before he thought himself alive, and in a fair way to eternal life; but afterwards, as sin appeared to him more vigorous than ever, he found himself a dead man, and dead to all hope of life by the law, being killed by it, or rather by sin which worked by it, (^{<8108>}Romans 7:8-11), and therefore he vindicates the law as holy, just, and good, (^{<8112>}Romans 7:12), and answers an objection that might be formed from what he had said concerning the effect the law had upon him, as if it was made death unto him; whereas the office it did was to show him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which, and not the law, was the cause of death, (^{<8113>}Romans 7:13), for to it with other saints he bears this testimony, that it is spiritual, though in comparison of it he was carnal and sold under sin, (^{<8114>}Romans 7:14), and from henceforward to the end of the chapter, he gives an account of the force and power of indwelling sin in him, and the conflict there was in him between grace and corruption: he had knowledge of that which is good, approved of it, and yet did it not, hated sin and yet committed it, (^{<8115>}Romans 7:15), but however, his desire after that which was good, and his approbation of it, showed that he agreed to this, that the law was good, (^{<8116>}Romans 7:16), nor was his commission of sin to be imputed to his renewed self, but to indwelling corruption, (^{<8117>}Romans 7:17), the fleshly part in him, in which was no good thing, (^{<8118>}Romans 7:18), he found he had a will to that which is good, but not power to perform it; which was abundantly evident by his practice, seeing what he would he did not, and what he would not he did. (^{<8119>}Romans 7:19), from whence he concludes again, (^{<8121>}Romans 7:20), as in (^{<8117>}Romans 7:17), that the evil he did was to be reckoned not to his spiritual, or renewed self, but to his corrupt nature; which he found, as a law that had power to command and to cause to obey, always at hand, close by him when he was desirous of doing good, (^{<8121>}Romans 7:21), and yet amidst all these workings of sin in him, he found a real delight and pleasure in the holy law of God, as he was renewed in the spirit of his mind, (^{<8122>}Romans 7:22),

upon the whole he perceived there were two contrary principles in him, which militated one against the other, and sometimes so it was, that through the strength of corrupt nature in him, he was made a captive to the law of sin and death, (~~6173~~Romans 7:23), which fetched from him a doleful lamentation and complaint, as if his case was desperate, and there was no deliverance for him, (~~6174~~Romans 7:24), and yet upon a view of his great Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus Christ, he takes heart, and thanks God that there was, and would be a deliverance for him through Christ, (~~6175~~Romans 7:25), and then closes the account which stood thus in his experience, and does in the experience of every regenerate man; that with his renewed mind he served the holy law of God from a principle of grace, and with his fleshly and carnal part the law of sin.

Ver. 1. *Know ye not, brethren*, etc.] The apostle having asserted, (~~6164~~Romans 6:14), that the believing Romans were “not under the law”; which he knew would be displeasing to many, and excepted to by them, especially the Jews that were among them, who though they believed in Christ, yet were zealous of the law, takes it up again, and explains and defends it. That they were the Jewish converts at Rome he here particularly addresses, appears partly from his calling them “brethren”, for they were so according to the flesh, as well as in a spiritual relation, and this he rather mentions to soften their resentments, and conciliate their minds to him; and partly from the words included in a parenthesis,

for I speak to them that know the law; not the law of nature, but the law of Moses, as the Jews did, being trained up in the knowledge of it; to these he appeals, saying, “know ye not”, for the truth of a principle or maxim he afterwards improves, which they could not be ignorant of,

how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he, or “it”,

liveth; for the word “liveth” may refer either to man or to the law. The law may be said to live, when it is in full force, and to be dead, when it is abrogated and disannulled; now whilst it lives, or is in force, it has dominion over a man; it can require and command obedience of him, and in case of disobedience can condemn him, and inflict punishment on him: and this power it has also as long as the man lives who is under it, but when he is dead it has no more dominion over him; then “the servant is free from his master”, (~~6169~~Job 3:19); that is, from the law of his master; and children are free from the law of their parents, the wife from the law of her husband,

and subjects from the law of their prince. This is so clear a point that none can doubt of it. The Jews have a saying^{f123}, that

“when a man is dead, he becomes *twxmh ^mw hrwt ^m yçpj* , free from the law, and from the commands.”

Ver. 2. *For the woman which hath an husband*, etc..] The former general rule is here illustrated by a particular instance and example in the law of marriage; a woman that is married to a man,

is bound by the law to her husband; to live with him, in subjection and obedience to him,

so long as he liveth; except in the cases of adultery, (~~409B~~ Matthew 19:9), and desertion, (~~407E~~ 1 Corinthians 7:15), by which the bond of marriage is loosed, and for which a divorce or separation may be made, which are equal to death:

but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband; the bond of marriage is dissolved, the law of it is abolished, and she is at entire liberty to marry whom she will, (~~407D~~ 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Ver. 3. *So then if while her husband liveth*, etc..] True indeed it is, that whilst her husband is alive, if

she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; she will be noted and accounted of as such everybody, except in the above mentioned cases:

but if her husband be dead; then there can be no exception to her marriage:

she is free from the law; of marriage, by which she was before bound:

so that she is no adulteress; nor will any reckon her such; she is clear from any such imputation:

though she be married to another man; hence it appears that second marriages are lawful.

Ver. 4. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also*, etc..] Here the apostle accommodates the foregoing instance and example to the case in hand, showing, that the saints were not under the law, the power and dominion of it; since that, as when a man is dead, the woman is loosed from that law

by which she was bound whilst he lived, that she may lawfully marry another man, and bear children to him without the imputation of adultery; so believers being dead to the law, and the law dead to them, which is all one, they are loosed from it, and may be, and are lawfully married to Christ, that they may bring forth the genuine fruits of good works, not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them, but for the honour and glory of God; in which account may be observed, an assertion that the saints and children of God

are become dead to the law, and that to them, as in (~~8106~~Romans 7:6), and can have no more power over them than a law can have over dead persons, or a dead abrogated law can have over living ones. They are represented as “dead to sin”, and “dead with Christ”, (~~8102~~Romans 6:2,8); and here, “dead to the law”, as in (~~8109~~Galatians 2:19), and consequently cannot be under it; are out of the reach of its power and government, since that only has dominion over a man as long as he lives the law is dead to them; it has no power over them, to threaten and terrify them into obedience to it; nor even rigorously to exact it, or command it in a compulsory way; nor is there any need of all this, since believers delight in it after the inward man, and serve it with their minds freely and willingly; the love of Christ, and not the terrors of the law, constrains them to yield a cheerful obedience to it; it has no power to charge and accuse them, curse or condemn them, or minister death unto them, no, not a corporeal one, as a penal evil, and much less an eternal one. And the way and means by which they become dead to the law, and that to them is,

by the body of Christ; not by Christ, as the body or substance of the ceremonial law; (see ~~5127~~Colossians 2:17); since that is not singly designed, but the whole law of Moses; but by “the body of Christ”, is either meant Christ himself, (~~8100~~Hebrews 10:10 9:14), or rather the human nature of Christ, (~~8105~~Hebrews 10:5), in which the law meets with every thing it can require and demand, as holiness of nature, which is the saints' sanctification in Christ; obedience of life, which is their righteousness; and sufferings of death, which is the penalty the law enjoins, whereby full expiation of sin is made, complete pardon is procured, and eternal redemption obtained; so that the law has nothing more to demand; its mouth is stopped, it is not in its power to curse and damn believers, they are dead to that, and that to them: the reason why the law is become so to them, and they to that, is,

that ye should be married to another; or “that ye should be to another”, or “be another's”; that is, that ye should appear to be so in a just and legal way; for they were another's, they were Christ's before by the Father's gift, and were secretly married to him in the everlasting covenant, before he assumed their nature, and in the body of his flesh bore their sins, satisfied law and justice, paid their debts, and so freed them from the power of the law, its curse and condemnation, or any obligation to punishment; all which was done in consequence of his interest in them, and their marriage relation to him; but here respect is had to their open marriage to him in time, the day of their espousals in conversion; to make way for which, the law, their former husband, must be dead, and they dead to that, that so their marriage to Christ might appear lawful and justifiable; who is very fitly described by him,

who is raised from the dead; and is a living husband, and will ever continue so, will never die more; and therefore as the saints can never be loosed from the marriage bond of union between Christ and them, so they can never be loosed from the law of this husband; wherefore though they are dead to the law as a covenant of works, and as ministered by Moses, and are free from any obligation to it, as so considered, yet they are “under the law to Christ”, (~~1~~1 Corinthians 9:21); under obligation, by the ties of love, to obedience to it, and shall never be loosed from it. The end of being dead to the law, and of being married to Christ, is,

that we should bring forth fruit unto God. The allusion is to children being called “the fruit of the womb”, (~~130~~Psalm 127:3 ~~1~~Luke 1:42), and here designs good works, the fruits of righteousness, which are brought forth by persons espoused to Christ, under the influence of the Spirit and grace of God; and they are “unto God”, that is, for the honour and glory of God; meaning either Christ the husband of believers, who is God over all blessed for ever; or God the Father, to whose praise and glory they are by Christ; and which is a reason and argument which strongly excites and encourages the saints to the performance of them: and let it be observed, that as children begotten and born in lawful marriage are only true and legitimate, and all before marriage are spurious and illegitimate; so such works only are the true and genuine fruits of righteousness, which are in consequence of a marriage relation to Christ; are done in faith, spring from love, and are directed to the glory of God; and all others, which are done before marriage to Christ, and without faith in him, are like spurious and illegitimate children.

Ver. 5. *For when we were in the flesh*, etc..] This respects not their being under the legal dispensation, the Mosaic economy; which lay greatly in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, such as regarded the flesh chiefly; so their meats and drinks concerned the body; their ablutions and washings sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; their circumcision was outward in the flesh; the several rituals of the law consisted in outward things, though typical of internal and spiritual ones; hence those that trusted in them trusted in the flesh: but to be “in the flesh” stands opposed, (~~to~~ Romans 7:8:9); to a being “in the spirit”; whereas there were many under that legal and carnal dispensation who were in the spirit, and had the Spirit of God, as David and others; besides, the apostle must be thought to use the phrase in such a sense, as to include all the persons he is speaking of and writing to, who were both Jews and Gentiles, for of such the church at Rome consisted; and the sense is this, “for when we”, Jews and Gentiles, who are now believers in Christ, “were” formerly, before our conversion to, and faith in Christ, “in the flesh”, that is, in a corrupt, carnal, and unregenerate state and condition; in which sense the word “flesh” is frequently used in the next chapter: now not all such who have flesh, sin, or corrupt nature in them, must be reckoned to be in the flesh, for there is a difference between flesh being in persons, from which none are free in this life, and their being in the flesh; nor all such who commit sin, or do carnal things at times, for there is not a just man that doth good and sinneth not; but such who are as they were born, without any alteration made in them by the Spirit and grace of God; who have nothing but flesh in them, no fear of God, nor love to and faith in Christ, nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; no true sight and sense of sin, nor any spiritual knowledge of salvation by Christ; in whom flesh is the governing principle, whose minds and principles are carnal, and their conversation wholly so; yea, persons may be in the flesh, in an unregenerate state, who may abstain from the grosser immoralities of life, and even make a profession of religion: now such these had been the apostle is speaking of and to, and tells how it was with them when in this state;

the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: by “the motions of sin” are meant, the evil passions and affections of the mind, the lusts of the heart, sinful desires, evil thoughts, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, the first motions of the mind to sin: these “were by the law”; not as the efficient

cause of them, that neither produces nor encourages them; it is holy, just, and good, requires truth in the inward parts, and not only forbids the outward acts of sin, but even covetous desires, and lustful thoughts: no, these inward motions of sin arise from a corrupt heart and nature; are encouraged and cherished by the old man that dwells there; and men are enticed by Satan to a compliance with them. Some think that the meaning of the phrase is, that these secret lusts of the heart are made known by the law, as in (~~800B~~Romans 7:7), so they are, but not whilst a man is in the flesh, or in an unregenerate state, but when he comes to be wrought upon powerfully by the Spirit of God, who makes use of the law to such a purpose: but the true sense of it is, that these motions of sin are irritated, provoked, and increased, through the law's prohibition of them; which is not to be charged as a fault on the law, but to be imputed to the depravity and corruption of man; who is like to one in a burning fever, very desirous of drink, who the more it is forbid, the more eager is he of it; or like a mighty torrent of water, which rises, rages, flows, and overflows, the more any methods are taken to stop its current; or like a filthy dunghill, which when the sun strikes powerfully on it, it exhales and draws out its filthy stench; which nauseous smell is not to be imputed to the pure rays of the sun, but to the filthiness of the dunghill: these motions of sin are said to “work in our members”; in the members of our bodies, which these sinful affections of the soul make use of to put them into action, and so they bring forth fruit; very evil fruit indeed, for nothing else can be expected from such an evil tree as the corrupt nature of man is: and this fruit is “unto death”: deadly fruit, worthy of death, and would issue in eternal death, if grace did not prevent: the rise, beginning, motion, progress, and issue of sin, are most exactly and beautifully described, agreeably to this account here, by the Apostle James, (~~501B~~James 1:13-15).

Ver. 6. *But now we are delivered from the law*, etc..] From the ministration of it, by Moses; from it, as a covenant of works; from its rigorous exaction; from its curse and condemnation, all this by Christ; and from its being an irritating, provoking law to sin, through the corruption of nature, by the Spirit and grace of Christ; but not from obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies read, “from the law of death”; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “we are loosed from the law, and are delivered from the former doctrine”; the doctrine of the legal dispensation.

That being dead; not sin, but the law: in what sense believers are dead to the law, and that to them, (see Gill on “^{<8704>}Romans 7:4”).

Wherein we were held: as a woman is by the law to her husband, or as persons guilty, who are detained prisoners; so we were “kept under the law, shut up unto the faith”, as in a prison, (^{<8723>}Galatians 3:23); Now the saints deliverance from the law through the abrogation of it, that losing its former life, vigour, power, and dominion, is not that they may live a loose licentious life and conversation, but that they

should serve the Lord their God without slavish fear, and with a godly one, acceptably, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of their lives; and their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, lawgiver in his church, and whose commandments are to be observed from a principle of love, in faith, and to his glory; yea, even the law itself, as held forth by him, as the apostle says in the close of this chapter, “with the mind I myself serve the law of God”, (^{<8725>}Romans 7:25): the manner in which this service is to be, and is performed, is,

in newness of Spirit; under the influences of the Spirit of God, the author of renovation, of the new creature, or new man created in us, in righteousness and true holiness; and from a new heart, and new Spirit, and new principles of life, light, love, and grace, formed in the soul; and by walking in “newness of life”, (^{<8704>}Romans 6:4), or by a new life, walk, and conversation:

and not in the oldness of the letter; not in the outward observance of the law of Moses, which is the “letter”; not indulging the old man, or walking after the dictates of corrupt nature; nor behaving according to the old former course of living: on the whole it may be observed, that a believer without the law, being delivered from it, that being dead to him, and he to that, lives a better life and conversation under the influence of the Spirit of God, than one that is under the law, and the works of it, destitute of the grace of God; the one brings forth “fruit unto death”, (^{<8705>}Romans 7:5), the other serves the Lord, “in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter”.

Ver. 7. *What shall we say then? is the law sin?* etc..] The apostle having said, that “the motions of sins were by the law”, (^{<8705>}Romans 7:5), meets with an objection, or rather an ill natured cavil, “is the law sin?” if the motions sins are by it, then it instigates and prompts men to sin; it cherishes

it in them; it leads them and impels them to the commission of it, and therefore must be the cause of sin; and if the cause of sin, then it must be sin, or sinful itself: “what shall we say then?” how shall we remove this difficulty, answer this objection, and silence this cavil? To this it is replied by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid! a way of speaking often made use of by the apostle, when any dreadful consequence was drawn from, or any shocking objection was made to his doctrine, and which was so monstrous as scarcely to deserve any other manner of refutation; (see ^{<A00B>}Romans 3:3-5 6:1,2,15); and next by observing the use of the law to discover sin; which it does by forbidding it, and threatening it with death; by accusing for it, convincing of it, and representing it in its proper colours, it being as a glass in which it may be beheld just as it is, neither greater nor less; which must be understood as attended with a divine power and light, otherwise as a glass is of no use to a blind man, so neither is the law in this sense, to a man in a state of darkness, until the Spirit of God opens his eyes to behold in this glass what manner of man he is: now since the law is so useful to discover, and so to discountenance sin, that itself cannot be sin, or sinful. The apostle exemplifies this in his own case, and says,

nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; which he says not in the person of another, there is no room nor reason for such a fancy; but in his own person, and of himself: not of himself at that present time, as is evident from his way of speaking; nor of himself in his childhood, before he came to years of discretion to discern between good and evil; but as, and when he was a grown person, and whilst a Pharisee, (^{<A00B>}Philippians 3:5); he did not know sin during his being in that state till the law came, and entered into his conscience, and then, and by it, he knew sin, (^{<A00B>}Romans 7:7), the exceeding sinfulness of it, (^{<A00B>}Romans 7:13), and that he himself was the chief of sinners, (^{<A00B>}1 Timothy 1:15). Nay he goes on to observe, that by the law he came to know, not only the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts; says he,

for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shall not covet: as it does in (^{<A00B>}Exodus 20:17). This is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they produce any passage out of the law, thus ^{f124}, *hrma hrwth*, “the law says”, if anyone comes to kill thee; referring either to (^{<A00B>}1 Samuel 24:11) or (^{<A00B>}Exodus 22:1); and a little after, “the law says”, namely, in (^{<A00B>}Exodus 3:5), “put off thy shoes from off thy feet”, etc.. By

“lust” is meant the inward motions of sin in the heart, any and every desire of the mind after it; not only studied and concerted schemes, how to bring about and compass an evil action; but every loose vagrant thought of sin, and inclination to it; yea, every imagination of the thought of the heart, before the imagination is well formed into a thought; and not only a dallying with sin in the mind, dwelling upon it with pleasure in thought, but even such sudden motions and starts of the mind to sin, to which we give no assent; such as are involuntary, yea, contrary to the will, being “the evil [we] would not”, (^{<8179>}Romans 7:19), and are displeasing and hateful to us; these are meant by lust, and which by the law of God are known to be sinful, and only by that. These were not known to be so by the Gentiles, who only had the law and light of nature; nor are they condemned, nor any provision made against them, nor can there be any made, by the laws of men: and though these inward lusts are condemned by the law of God, yet inasmuch as they were not punishable by men, and could be covered with the guise of an external righteousness, multitudes who were born under, and brought up in that law, were secure and indolent about them, did not look upon them as sins, or as at all affecting their righteousness; but imagined that, “touching the righteousness of the law”, they were “blameless”, (^{<8186>}Philippians 3:6); which was the case of all the Pharisees, and of the apostle whilst such: but when the law came and entered his conscience with power and light attending it, then he saw, such innumerable swarms of lusts in his heart, and these to be sinful, which he never saw and knew before: just as in a sunbeam we behold those numerous little bits of dust, which otherwise are indiscernible by us. Now since the law is of such use, not only to discover the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts and desires, that itself cannot be sinful.

Ver. 8. *But sin taking occasion by the commandment*, etc..] By “the commandment” is meant, either the whole moral law, or that particular commandment, “thou shalt not covet”, (^{<8207>}Exodus 20:17), which, the Jews say, comprehends all;

“God, (say they ^{f125}), caused them (the Israelites) to hear the ten words, which he concluded with this word, “thou shalt not covet”; **wb** **μywl t μl wkç**, “for all of them depend on that”: and to intimate, that whoever keeps this commandment, it is as if he kept the whole law, and whoever transgresses this, it is all one as if he transgressed the whole law;”

and no doubt but it does refer to any unlawful thought of, desire after, and inclination to anything forbidden in the other commandments. By “sin” is meant, not the devil, as some of the ancients thought; but the vitiosity and corruption of nature, indwelling sin, the law in the members that took “occasion” by the law of God; so that the law at most could only be an occasion, not the cause of sin, and besides, this was an occasion not given by the law, but taken by sin; so that it was sin, and not the law, which

wrought in [him] all manner of concupiscence. The law forbidding every unclean thought, and covetous desire of unlawful objects, sin took an occasion through these prohibitions to work in him, stir up and excite concupiscence, evil desire after all manner of things forbidden by the law; hence it is clear that not the law, but sin, is exceeding sinful:

for without the law sin was dead; not that, before the law of Moses was given, sin lay dead and unexerted, for during that interval between Adam and Moses sin was, and lived and reigned, and death by it, as much as at any other time; but when the apostle was without the law, that is, without the knowledge of the spirituality of it, before it came with power and light into his heart and conscience, sin lay as though it was dead; it was so in his apprehension, he fancied himself free from it, and that he was perfectly righteous.

Ver. 9. *For I was alive without the law once,* etc..] The apostle says this, not in the person of Adam, as some have thought; who lived indeed, in a state of innocence, a perfectly holy and righteous life, but not without the law, which was the rule of his actions, and the measure of his obedience; he had the law of nature written upon his heart, and a positive law respecting the forbidden fruit given him, as a trial of his obedience; and though when he transgressed he became mortal, yet sin could not be said to revive in him, which never lived before; nor does the apostle speak in the person of a Jew, or the whole body of the people of Israel before the law was given on Mount Sinai; before that time the sons of Abraham did not live without a law; for besides the law of nature, which they had in common with others, they were acquainted with other laws of God, as the laws of circumcision, sacrifices, and the several duties of religion; (see ^{GENESIS} Genesis 18:19); and when the law did come from Mount Sinai, it had not such effects upon them as are here expressed: but the apostle is speaking of himself, and that not as in his state of infancy before he could discern between good and evil, but when grown up, and whilst a Pharisee; who, though he was born

under the law, was brought up and more perfectly instructed in it than the common people were, and was a strict observer of it, yet was without the knowledge of the spirituality of it; he, as the rest of the Pharisees, thought it only regarded the outward actions, and did not reach to the spirits or souls of men, the inward thoughts and affections of the mind; the law was as it were at a distance from him, it had not as yet entered into his heart and conscience; and whilst this was his case he was “alive”, he did not know that he “was dead in trespasses and sins”, (Ephesians 2:1), a truth he afterwards was acquainted with; nor that he was so much as disordered by sin; he thought himself healthful, sound, and whole, when he was diseased and full of wounds, bruises, and sores, from head to foot; he lived in the utmost peace and tranquillity, without the least ruffle and uneasiness, free from any terror or despondency, and in perfect security, being in sure and certain hope of eternal life; and concluded if ever any man went to heaven he certainly should, since, as he imagined, he lived a holy and righteous life, free of all blame, and even to perfection;

but when the commandment came; not to Adam in the garden of Eden; nor to the Israelites on Mount Sinai; but into the heart and conscience of the apostle, with power and light from above:

sin revived; it lift up its monstrous head, and appeared in its ugly shape, exceeding sinful indeed; it grew strong and exerted itself; its strugglings and opposition, its rebellion and corruption were seen and felt, which show that it was not dead before, only seemed to be so; it was in being, and it lived and acted before as now; the difference was not in that, but in the apostle's sense and apprehension of it, who upon sight of it died away:

and I died; he now saw himself a dead man, dead in sin, dead in law, under a sentence of death which he now had within himself; he saw he was deserving of eternal death, and all his hopes of eternal life by his obedience to the law of works died at once; he now experimentally learnt that doctrine he so much insisted afterwards in his ministry, and to the last maintained, that there can be no justification of a sinner by the deeds of the law, since by it is the knowledge of sin.

Ver. 10. *And the commandment which was ordained to life*, etc..] The law which promised a continuance of an immortal life to Adam, in case of perfect obedience to it; and which was appointed to the Israelites, that by the observation of it they might live in the land of Canaan, and in the quiet and full possession of their privileges and enjoyments; but was never

ordained to eternal life, or that men should obtain that by their obedience to it; since eternal life is the free gift of God, without respect to any works of men; (see ~~ⲀⲚⲔⲓ~~Galatians 3:21); This same law, the apostle says,

I found to be unto death; as it was an occasion, through the vitiosity of nature, of stirring up sin in him, which brought forth fruit unto death; as it convinced him that he was a dead man and worthy of death; as it threatened him with it, and struck all his hopes of eternal life dead, and left him in this condition without giving him the least direction or assistance whereby to obtain life.

Ver. 11. *For sin taking occasion by the commandment*, etc..] As in (~~ⲀⲚⲔⲓ~~Romans 7:8),

deceived me; either by promising pleasure or impunity: the same effect is ascribed by the Jews to the evil imagination or corruption of nature, which they say is called an enticer, *ⲓⲃⲁ ⲙⲧⲡⲙⲥ*, “that deceives man”^{f126}:

and by it slew me; mortally wounded me: not the law, but sin by the law, deceived and slew him; so that as before, the law is cleared from being the cause of sin, so here, from being the cause of death; for though the law is a killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death, yet it is not the cause of it; but sin, which is a transgression of the law, is that which deceives or leads out of the way, as the word signifies, and then kills. The metaphor is taken from a thief or a robber, who leads a man out of the way into some bypath, and then murders him.

Ver. 12. *Therefore the law is holy*, etc..] This is a conclusion or inference drawn from the preceding discourse, in commendation of the law; that standing clear of any charge or imputation of sin, as being the cause of it. This epithet the apostle gives to the law is what the Jews frequently give it; worthy are the Israelites, say they^{f127},

“to whom is given *ⲁⲥⲓⲃⲓ ⲁⲧⲓⲃⲣⲱ* “the holy law”; in which they study day and night.”

By “the law” is meant the whole body of the precepts of it in general; and by

the commandment, either the same, or everyone of the commandments in particular, and especially that which is cited, “thou shall not covet”. Some have thought that the three properties of it design the threefold division of

the law; and suppose that by that which is “holy” is meant the ceremonial law, which sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; by that which is “just”, the judicial law, which pointed out to the Jewish commonwealth what was right and wrong; and by that which is “good”, the moral law in all its precepts: but nothing is more certain, than that the moral law is only spoken of in this context, which may be said to be

holy, because of its author, the holy God, from whom nothing can come but what is holy; and because of the matter of it, it is a transcript of the holy nature of God, a declaration of his holy will; it requires holiness both of heart and life; it forbids whatever is unholy, and commands nothing but what is holy; it teaches men to live holy, sober, righteous, and godly lives. It may be truly called

just, or righteous, as it demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, or it will not admit of it as a righteousness; as it pronounces guilty, curses and condemns for every disobedience of it; as it deals impartially with persons the transgressors of it; and as it acquits believers upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ, the fulfilling end of it. It is rightly called

good, from the author of it, God, from whom every good thing comes, and nothing else; from the matter of it, and from the use of it both to saints and sinners.

Ver. 13. *Was then that which is good, made death unto me?* etc.] An objection is started upon the last epithet in commendation of the law; and it is as if the objector should say, if the law is good, as you say, how comes it to pass that it is made death, or is the cause of death to you? can that be good, which is deadly, or the cause of death? or can that be the cause of death which is good? This objection taken out of the mouth of another person proceeds upon a mistake of the apostle's meaning; for though he had said that he died when the commandment came, and found by experience that it was unto death, yet does not give the least intimation that the law was the cause of his death; at most, that it was only an occasion, and that was not given by the law, but taken by sin, which, and not the law, deceived him and slew him. Nor is it any objection to the goodness of the law, that it is a ministration of condemnation and death to sinners; for “*lex non damnans, non est lex*”, a law without a sanction or penalty, which has no power to condemn and punish, is no law, or at least a law of no use and service; nor is the judge, or the sentence which he according to law pronounces upon a malefactor, the cause of his death, but

the crime which he is guilty of; and the case is the same here, wherefore the apostle answers to this objection with abhorrence and detestation of fixing any such charge upon the law, as being the cause of death to him, saying,

God forbid; a way of speaking used by him, as has been observed, when anything is greatly disliked by him, and is far from his thoughts. Moreover, he goes on to open the true end and reason of sin, by the law working death in his conscience;

but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that is, the vitiosity and corruption of nature, which is designed by sin, took an occasion, “by that which is good”, that is, the law, through its prohibition of lust, to work in me all manner of concupiscence, which brought forth fruit unto death; wherefore, upon the law's entrance into my heart and conscience, I received the sentence of death in myself, that so sin by it, “working death in me, might appear sin” to me, which I never knew before. This end was to be, and is answered by it, yea,

that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful; that the corruption of nature might not only be seen and known to be sin, but exceeding sinful; as being not only contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, but as taking occasion by the pure and holy law of God to exert itself the more, and so appear to be as the words *καψ' υπερβολην αμαρτωλος*, may be rendered, “exceedingly a sinner”, or “an exceeding great sinner”; that being the source and parent of all actual sins and transgressions; wherefore not the law, but sin, was the cause of death, which by the law is discovered to be so very sinful.

Ver. 14. *For we know that the law is spiritual*, etc..] We who have a spiritual understanding of the law, who have been led into the true nature of it by the Spirit of God, know by experience that that itself is “spiritual”; and therefore can never be the cause of sin or death: the law may be said to be “spiritual”, because it comes from the Spirit of God; and reaches to the spirit of man; it requires truth in the inward parts; spiritual service and obedience; a serving of it with our minds; a worshipping of God in spirit and truth; a loving of him with all our hearts and souls, as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty; and because it cannot be truly obeyed and conformed to without the assistance of the Spirit of God. To this spirituality of the law the apostle opposes himself,

but I am carnal, sold under sin: from hence to the end of the chapter many are of opinion, that the apostle speaks in the person of an unregenerate man, or of himself as unregenerate; but nothing is more clear, than that he speaks all along of himself in the first person, “I am carnal”:, etc.. **αυτος εγω**, “I myself”, as in (~~<4875>~~Romans 7:25), and in the present tense of what he then was and found; whereas, when he speaks of his unregenerate state, and how it was with him under the first convictions of sin, he speaks of them as things past, (~~<4875>~~Romans 7:5-11); besides, several things which are said by the apostle can neither agree with him, nor any other, but as regenerate; such as to “hate evil”, “delight in the law of God”, and “serve it with the mind”, (~~<4875>~~Romans 7:15,22,25). Moreover, the distinctions between flesh and spirit, the inward and the outward man, and the struggle there is between them, are to be found in none but regenerate persons; and to say no more, the thanksgiving for deliverance from sin by Christ can only come from such; nor are any of the things said inapplicable to men that are born again, as will appear by the consideration of them as they follow: for when the apostle says, “I am carnal”; his meaning is, either that he was so by nature, and as he saw himself when sin through the law became exceeding sinful to him; or as he might be denominated from the flesh or corruption of nature which was still in him, and from the infirmities of the flesh he was attended with; just as the Corinthians, though sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, are said to be “carnal” on account of their envying, strife, and divisions, (~~<4870>~~1 Corinthians 3:1-4), or in comparison of the “spiritual” law of God, which was now before him, and in which he was beholding his face as in a glass, and with which when compared, the holiest man in the world must be reckoned carnal. He adds, “sold under sin”; he did not “sell himself” to work wickedness, as Ahab, (~~<1225>~~1 Kings 21:25), and others; he was passive and not active in it; and when at any time he with his flesh served the law of sin, he was not a voluntary, but an involuntary servant; besides, this may be understood of his other I, his carnal I, his unrenewed self, the old man which is always under sin, when the spiritual I, the new man, is never under the law of sin, but under the governing influence of the grace of God.

Ver. 15. *For that which I do, I allow not*, etc..] The apostle having cleared the law from the charge of being the cause either of sin or death, and taken the blame to himself, proceeds to give an account of the struggle and combat he found in himself between the flesh and spirit; “that which I do, I allow not”. That which he did was evil, since he allowed not of it; but this

is to be understood not of any notorious crime committed by him, and repeated again and again; nor of a sinful course of life, for before his conversion he was not a profane man, but externally moral; and after his conversion, had his conversation in the world by the grace of God in righteousness and holiness; a vicious course of life being contrary to the grace of God implanted in him, and the doctrines of grace professed by him; but of internal lusts, the workings of corruptions in his heart, and which are real actions of the mind, together with the various frailties and infirmities of life: when that apostle says that what he did, **γινωσκω**, “I know not”: his meaning is, not that he was utterly ignorant of them, of their nature and operations; that he was insensible of their motions, and unconcerned about them; for his sense of them, and concern for them, are expressed by him in the strongest terms, “I know”, “I find”, “I see”, “O wretched man”, etc.. (^{<4078>}Romans 7:18,21,23,24); but either that the efforts and effects of sin in him were so sadden, and at an unawares, that he was sometimes overtaken and held captive, before he knew well where he was, or, what he was doing; or the sense is, that he had not a full knowledge of the evil of his heart, the corruptions of his nature, nor did he understand all his infirmities and the errors of his life; or else the meaning is, I own it not as right, but confess it to be wrong, I do not acknowledge these actions as the productions of the new man, they are alien to him, but as the deeds of the old man; or rather, “I do not approve” of them, I dislike, abhor, and detest them; I cannot excuse or palliate them, but must condemn them; so words of knowledge in the Hebrew language are expressive of love, liking, and approbation; (see ^{<4906>}Psalm 1:6 ^{<2894>}Hosea 8:4 ^{<0189>}Genesis 18:19); on which last text, “I know him”, says Jarchi, **hbj ׀ַׁׁל**, “it is the language of love”, or a phrase expressive of strong affection; and so here, I know not, I do not like, love, and approve of these things, or I do not “allow” of them, and indulge myself in them, I loathe them and myself for them; and is this talking like an unregenerate man? can it be thought that the apostle speaks of himself as unregenerate, or represents such a man?

for what I would, that do I not; what he desired and willed was good, though he did it not; and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, “for not the good which I would, I do”: and so the next clause, “but the evil which I hate, I do”: and what was that? he would have had his thoughts always employed about the best things; he would have had his affections continually and alone set on God, Christ, and the things of another world; he would he was desirous to keep the whole law of God, and do the whole

will of God, and live without sin, and as the angels do in heaven: now such a will as this is never to be found in unregenerate persons; this is from God, and the power of his grace: when he says he did not what he willed, what he was desirous of, and bent upon, his sense is, not that he never did any good thing he willed; for he did many good things, as every good man does, but he did not always do the good he willed, and never perfectly, nor anything without grace and strength from Christ: he adds,

but what I hate, that do I; sin was what he hated; it being contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, to the good and righteous law of God, and was in itself, to his view, exceeding sinful: he hated vain thoughts, unclean desires, revengeful lusts, the secret motions of all sin in his heart, and the various evil actions of life; which can never be said of an unregenerate man; who loves sin, delights in iniquity, and takes pleasure in them that do it; and yet what the apostle hated he did; he wrought with his carnal I, his flesh, and through the power of it, and force of temptation, though not without reluctance, remorse, and repentance. The Karaite Jews, which were the better sort of them, say and hold some things, not much unlike to what is here delivered;

“though a man (say they ^{f128}) should transgress some of the commandments, or the commandments in part, **bj h dx l [al hwat trwbgtl** , “through the strength of lust, and not on account of, or with pleasure not delight”, he shall be one of those that shall enter into paradise.”

Ver. 16. *If then I do that which I would not*, etc..] This is a corollary, or an inference from what he had related of his own experience; that since what he did, though it was contrary to the law of God, yet was what he did not will nor allow of, but hated, it must be a clear point, that he

consented to the law, that it was good; lovely and amiable; that it forbade those things which were hateful, and commanded those things which were desirable to a good man; and so is acknowledged to be a very beautiful rule of obedience, walk, and conversation.

Ver. 17. *Now then, it is no more I that do it*, etc..] This is another inference, deduced from what is before said, that since he did not approve, but hated what he did, and willed the contrary, it was not he as spiritual, as born again, as a new man, a new creature, that did it; (see ^{GRB} 1 John 3:9). He says,

But sin that dwelleth in me; the old man, the carnal I, the evil present with him, the law in his members; which not only existed in him, and wrought in him, and that at times very strongly, but dwelt in him, had its abode in him, as it has in all regenerate persons, and will have, as long as they are in the body.

Ver. 18. *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh*, etc..] The apostle goes on to give some further account of himself, what he knew, and was fully assured of by long experience; as that

dwelleth no good thing in him, that is, in his flesh, or carnal self; for otherwise there were many good things dwelt in him; there was the good work of grace, and the good word of God in him, and even Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelt in him; but his meaning is, that there was no good thing naturally in him; no good thing of his own putting there; nothing but what God had put there; no good thing, but what was owing to Christ, to the grace of God, and influence of the Spirit; or as he himself explains it, there was no good thing in his “flesh”; in the old man that was in him, which has nothing in his nature good; no good thing comes out of him, nor is any good thing done by him: and this explanative and limiting clause, “that is, in my flesh”, clearly proves, that the apostle speaks of himself, and as regenerate; for had he spoke in the person of an unregenerate man, there would have been no room nor reason for such a restriction, seeing an unregenerate man is nothing else but flesh, and has nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in him; and who does not know, that no good thing dwells in such persons? whereas the apostle intimates by this explication, that he had something else in him beside flesh, and which is opposed to it; and that is spirit, or the new man, which is of a spiritual nature, and is seated in the spirit, or soul, and comes from the Spirit of God; and in this spiritual man dwell good things, for “the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth”; so that though there was no good thing dwelling in his flesh, in the old man, yet there were good things dwelling in his spirit, in the new and spiritual man, the hidden man of the heart: and he adds,

to will is present with me; which must be understood, not of the power and faculty of the will, with respect to things natural and civil, which is common to all men; nor of a will to that which is evil, which is in wicked men; but of a will to that which was good, which he had not of himself, but from God, and is only to be found in regenerate persons; and denotes the

readiness of his mind and will to that which is spiritually good, like that which Christ observes of his disciples, when he says, “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”, (^{<4254>}Matthew 26:41), which may serve much to illustrate the passage before us: since it follows,

but how to perform that which is good, I find not; he found he had no strength of himself to do what he willed; and that he could do nothing without Christ; and that what he did by the strength and grace of Christ, he did not do perfectly. To will to live without sin, not to have a lustful or a revengeful thought in his breast, was present with him, but how to perform, how to live in this manner, which was so desirable to him, being born again, he found not. It may be asked, how does this agree with what the apostle says, “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?” (^{<5183>}Philippians 2:13). To this it may be replied, that when God does work in his people both to will and to do, he does not work both equally alike, or to the same degree, so that the work answers to the will; God never works in them so to do, as to will, for when they are wrought in, acted upon, and influenced to do the most, and that in the best manner, they never do all that they would; and sometimes God works in them to will, when he does not work in them to do; as in the case of the disciples of Christ, in whom he worked to will to watch with Christ an hour, but did not work in them to do, (^{<4254>}Matthew 26:40); and whenever he works in the saints, whether to will or to do, or both, it is always of his own good pleasure.

Ver. 19. *For the good that I would, I do not*, etc..] The apostle here repeats what he had delivered in (^{<4575>}Romans 7:15,16) to strengthen and confirm this part of his experience; that though he had a will to that which was good, yet he wanted power, and had none of himself to perform; and therefore often did what he would not, and what he would he did not.

Ver. 20. *Now if I do that I would not*, etc..] The same conclusion is formed here, as in (^{<4575>}Romans 7:17), not with any view to excuse himself from blame in sinning, but to trace the lusts of his heart, and the sins of his life, to the source and fountain of them, the corruption of his nature; and to ascribe them to the proper cause of them, which was not the law of God, nor the new man, but sin that dwelt in him.

Ver. 21. *I find then a law*, etc..] This is to be understood either of the corruption of nature, which he found by experience to be in him; and which, because of its force, power, and prevalence it sometimes had in him,

he calls “a law”; it forcibly demanding compliance with its lusts; and is the same with what he calls “evil”, and which the Jews so frequently style [רְחֵרְחֵי “the evil imagination”, by which they mean the corruption of nature; and one of the seven names, and the first of them, by which it is called, they tell us ^{f129}, is, [ר, “evil”; the very name it goes by here, and which they say God calls it, (~~0005~~Genesis 6:5); and well may it be so called, since it is originally, naturally, and continually evil; it is evil in its nature and consequences; it is the source and spring of all evil:

that when I would do good; says the apostle, as soon as any good thought arises in me, any good resolution is entered into by me, or I am about to do anything that is good,

evil, the vitiosity of nature,

is present with me, and hinders me; it came into the world with me, and it has continued with me ever since; it cleaves close unto me, it lies very nigh me, and whenever there is any motion to that which is good, it starts up, which seemed to lie asleep before, and exerts itself, so that I cannot do the good I would. The Jews say ^{f130}, there are תּוֹבֵל וְרָע, “two hearts” in man, the good imagination, and the evil imagination. The apostle here speaks as of two wills in regenerate men, one to good, and another to evil: or this may be understood of the law of God, which he found agreed with his mind, willing that which is good, though sin lay so near to him; or he found that willing that which was good was the law of God, very agreeable to it; and that the law was on his side, favouring him, encouraging him to that which is good, though sin kept so close to him; to which sense agree the following words.

Ver. 22. *For I delight in the law of God*, etc..] This an unregenerate man cannot do; he does not like its commands, they are disagreeable to his corrupt nature; and as it is a threatening, cursing, damning law, it can never be delighted in by him: the moralist, the Pharisee, who obeys it externally, do not love it, nor delight in it; he obeys it not from love to its precepts, but from fear of its threatenings; from a desire of popular esteem, and from low, mercenary, selfish views, in order to gain the applause of men, and favour of God: only a regenerate man delights in the law of God; which he does, as it is fulfilled by Christ, who has answered all the demands of it: and as it is in the hands of Christ, held forth by him as a rule of holy walk and conversation; and as it is written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, to

which he yields a voluntary and cheerful obedience: he serves it with his mind, of a ready mind freely, and without any constraint but that of love; he delights together with the law, as the word here used signifies; the delight is mutual and reciprocal, the law delights in him, and he delights in the law; and they both delight in the selfsame things, and particularly in the perfect obedience which the Son of God has yielded to it. The apostle adds,

after the inward man; by which he means the renewed man, the new man, or new nature, formed in his soul; which had its seat in the inward part, is an internal principle, oil in the vessel of the heart, a seed under ground, the kingdom within us, the hidden man of the heart, which is not obvious to everyone's view, it being not anything that is external, though never so good: this in its nature is agreeable to the law of God, and according to this a regenerate man delights in it: but then this restrictive limiting clause supposes another man, the old man, the carnal I, according to which the apostle did not delight in the law of God; and proves, that he speaks of himself as regenerate, and not as unregenerate, or as representing an unregenerate man, because no such distinction is to be found in such a person; nor does such a person delight at all, in any sense, upon any consideration in the law of God, but is enmity against it, and not subjected to it; nor can he be otherwise, without the grace of God.

Ver. 23. *But I see another law in my members*, etc..] That is, he saw, he perceived it by experience; he felt the force and power of inbred corruption working in him, and as a law demanding obedience to it; and which he might well call “another law”, it being not only distinct from, but opposite to the law of God he delighted in; the one is good, the other evil; this other law is a transgression of the law of God, and which he observed to be “in [his] members”, i.e. in the members of his body; not that it had its seat only, or chiefly in his body, and the parts of it, but because it exerted itself by them, it made use of them to fulfil its lusts: the same phrase is used in the Targum on (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 38:3); which renders the words there thus, there is no peace, *yrbab*, “in my members” because of my sin: now this law was, says he,

warring against the law of my mind; by the “law of [his] mind” is meant, either the law of God written on his mind in conversion, and which he delighted in, and served with his mind, as renewed by the Spirit of God; or the new nature in him, the principle of grace wrought in his mind, called

“the law” of it, because it was the governing principle there; which reigns, and will reign in every regenerate person through righteousness, unto eternal life, though the law of sin opposes all its force and power against it; that is not only contrary to it, lusts against it, but wars, and commits acts of hostility against it: the state of regenerate persons is a warfare, they have many enemies to combat with, as Satan and the world; but those of their own household, within themselves, in their own hearts, are the worst of all; there is a civil war in them, as it were a company of two armies, flesh and spirit, sin and grace, combating together; and so it will be as long as this life lasts; so true is that saying of the Jews^{f131}, in which they agree with the apostle,

“as long as the righteous live, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτοῖς ὡς ἐν πόλει πολέμῳ, “they are at war with the corruption of their nature”; when they die they are at rest:”

hence we read of ἡ ἐν ἡμῶν ἐπιθυμία τοῦ κακοῦ, “the war of the evil imagination”^{f132}; but what is worst of all, this is sometimes

bringing [them] into captivity to the law of sin, which is in [their] members; that is, to itself; for the law in the members, and the law of sin in the members, must be the same: and it may be said to bring into captivity to itself, when it only endeavours to do it, though it does not effect it; for sometimes words which express an effect only design the endeavour to effect, but not that itself; (see ^{<224B>}Ezekiel 24:13 ^{<0372>}Genesis 37:21, 22 ^{<0188>}Exodus 8:18). But admitting that this phrase intends the real and actual effecting of it, it is to be understood of a captivity to sin, different from that an unregenerate man is in; who is a voluntary captive to sin and Satan, gives up himself to such slavery and bondage, and rather goes, than is brought or carried into it; whereas a regenerate man is, through the force of sin, and power of temptation, violently drawn and carried into captivity; in which he is held against his will, and to his great uneasiness: besides, this expression does not denote absolute dominion, which sin has not over a regenerate man; nor is it utterly inconsistent with his character as such; for as a subject of one nation may be taken a prisoner, and be carried captive into another nation, and yet remain a subject where he was, and does not become one of that country of which he is carried captive; so a regenerate man, being carried captive by sin, does not come under the absolute dominion of sin, or cease to be a subject of the kingdom of grace, or in other words, a regenerate person: moreover, the very phrase of “bringing into captivity” supposes that the person before was not a captive; whereas

every unregenerate man one, was always so, and never otherwise: add to all this, that this captivity was very distressing and uneasy to the person, and makes him cry out, “O wretched man”, etc.. whereas the captivity of an unregenerate person is very agreeable to him; he likes his prison, he loves his chains, and do not choose to be in any other state and condition; though, as the Jews ^{f133} say, there is no captivity **hmçnh twl gk**, “like the captivity of the soul”; and nothing so grieving and afflictive to a good man as that is. The apostle uses much such language as his countrymen do, who frequently represent man as having two principles in him, the one good, the other bad; the one they call **[rh rxy**, “the evil imagination”, or corruption of nature; the other they call **bwj h rxy**, “the good imagination”, or principle of grace and goodness; which they say ^{f134}, are at continual war with each other, and the one is sometimes **hbçn**, “carried captive” by the other. The good imagination, they say ^{f135}, is like to one that **yrwsaj tybb çwbj**, “is bound in a prison”; as it is said, “out of prison he cometh to reign”; to which agrees what they say ^{f136},

“how shall I serve my Creator whilst I am **yrxy rysa**, “a captive to my corruption”, and a servant to my lust?”

Ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am*, etc..] Not as considered in Christ, for as such he was a most happy man, being blessed with all spiritual blessings, and secure from all condemnation and wrath; nor with respect to his inward man, which was renewing day by day, and in which he enjoyed true spiritual peace and pleasure; nor with regard to his future state, of the happiness of which he had no doubt: he knew in whom he had believed; he was fully persuaded nothing could separate him from the love of God; and that when he had finished his course, he should have the crown of righteousness laid up for him: but this exclamation he made on account of the troubles he met with in his Christian race; and not so much on account of his reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake; though these were many and great, yet these did not move or much affect him, he rather took delight and pleasure in them; but on account of that continual combat between, the flesh and spirit in him; or by reason of that mass of corruption and body of sin he carried about with him; ranch such a complaint Isaiah makes, (²³⁰⁵Isaiah 6:5), which in the Septuagint is, **ω τάλας εγω**, “O miserable I”. This shows him to be, and to speak of himself as a regenerate man; since an unregenerate man feels no uneasiness upon that score, or makes any complaint of it, saying as here,

who shall deliver me from the body of this death? or “this body of death”; by which some understand, this mortal body, or the body of flesh subject to death for sin; and suppose the apostle expresses his desire to quit it, to depart out of it, that he might enjoy an immortal life, being weary of the burden of this mortal body he carried about with him: so Philo the Jew^{f137} represents the body as a burden to the soul, which **νεκροφορουσα**, “it carries about as a dead carcass”, and never lays down from his birth till his death: though it should be observed, that when the apostle elsewhere expresses an earnest longing after a state of immortality and glory, some sort of reluctance and unwillingness to leave the body is to be observed, which is not to be discerned here; and was this his sense, one should think he would rather have said, when shall I be delivered? or why am I not delivered? and not who shall deliver me? though admitting this to be his meaning, that he was weary of the present life, and wanted to be rid of his mortal body, this did not arise from the troubles and anxieties of life, with which he was pressed, which oftentimes make wicked men long to die; but from the load of sin, and burden of corruption, under which he groaned, and still bespeaks him a regenerate man; for not of outward calamities, but of indwelling sin is he all along speaking in the context: wherefore it is better by “this body of death” to understand what he in (~~6:6~~Romans 6:6) calls “the body of sin”; that mass of corruption that lodged in him, which is called “a body”, because of its fleshly carnal nature; because of its manner of operation, it exerts itself by the members of the body; and because it consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and “a body of death”, because it makes men liable to death: it was that which the apostle says “slew” him, and which itself is to a regenerate man, as a dead carcass, stinking and loathsome; and is to him like that punishment Mezentius inflicted on criminals, by fastening a living body to a putrid carcass^{f138}; and it is emphatically called the body of “this death”, referring to the captivity of his mind, to the law of sin, which was as death unto him: and no wonder therefore he so earnestly desires deliverance, saying, “who shall deliver me?” which he speaks not as being ignorant of his deliverer, whom he mentions with thankfulness in (~~7:25~~Romans 7:25); or as doubting and despairing of deliverance, for he was comfortably assured of it, and therefore gives thanks beforehand for it; but as expressing the inward pantings, and earnest breathings of his soul after it; and as declaring the difficulty of it, yea, the impossibility of its being obtained by himself, or by any other than he, whom he had in view: he knew he could not deliver

himself from sin; that the law could not deliver him; and that none but God could do it; and which he believed he would, through Jesus Christ his Lord.

Ver. 25. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, etc..] There is a different reading of this passage; some copies read, and so the Vulgate Latin version, thus, “the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord”; which may be considered as an answer to the apostle's earnest request for deliverance, “who shall deliver me?” the grace of God shall deliver me. The grace of God the Father, which is communicated through Christ the Mediator by the Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ, the principle of grace formed in the soul by the Spirit of God, which reigns in the believer as a governing principle, through righteousness unto eternal life, will in the issue deliver from indwelling sin, and all the effects of it: but the more general reading is, “thanks be to God”, or “I thank God”; the object of thanksgiving is God, as the Father of Christ, and the God of all grace: the medium of it is Christ as Mediator, through whom only we have access to God; without him we can neither pray to him, nor praise him aright; our sacrifices of praise are only acceptable to God, through Christ; and as all our mercies come to us through him, it is but right and fitting that our thanksgivings should pass the same way: the thing for which thanks is given is not expressed, but is implied, and is deliverance; either past, as from the power of Satan, the dominion of sin, the curse of the law, the evil of the world, and from the hands of all spiritual enemies, so as to endanger everlasting happiness; or rather, future deliverance, from the very being of sin: which shows, that at present, and whilst in this life, saints are not free from it; that it is God only that must, and will deliver from it; and that through Christ his Son, through whom we have victory over every enemy, sin, Satan, law, and death; and this shows the apostle's sure and certain faith and hope of this matter, who concludes his discourse on this head thus:

so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin; observe, he says, “I myself”, and not another; whence it is clear, he does not represent another man in this discourse of his; for this is a phrase used by him, when he cannot possibly be understood of any other but himself; (see ^{<489B>}Romans 9:3 ^{<470E>}2 Corinthians 10:1 12:13); he divides himself as it were into two parts, the mind, by which he means his inward man, his renewed self; and “the flesh”, by which he designs his carnal I, that was sold under sin: and hereby he accounts for his serving, at different times, two different laws; “the law of God”, written on his mind, and in the

service of which he delighted as a regenerate man; “and the law of sin”, to which he was sometimes carried captive: and it should be taken notice of, that he does not say “I have served”, as referring to his past state of unregeneracy, but “I serve”, as respecting his present state as a believer in Christ, made up of flesh and spirit; which as they are two different principles, regard two different laws: add to all this, that this last account the apostle gives of himself, and which agrees with all he had said before, and confirms the whole, was delivered by him, after he had with so much faith and fervency given thanks to God in a view of his future complete deliverance from sin; which is a clinching argument and proof that he speaks of himself, in this whole discourse concerning indwelling sin, as a regenerate person.