

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 9

The apostle having discoursed of justification and sanctification, and of the privileges of justified and sanctified ones, proceeds to treat of predestination, the source and spring of all the blessings of grace; and to observe how this distinguishing act of God's sovereign will has taken place, both among Jews and Gentiles; in treating of which, he knew he should go contrary to the sense of his countrymen the Jews, who have a notion that all Israel shall have a part in, or inherit the world to come^{f160}: and that the Gentiles will be for ever miserable; and nothing was more disagreeable to them, than to talk of their rejection of God, and the calling of the Gentiles; wherefore that it might be manifest, that it was not out of pique and ill will to them, that the apostle said the things hereafter related; he expresses the most cordial affection to them imaginable, and which he introduces in (~~ROM~~Romans 9:1), by way of appeal to Christ, who knew the truth of what he was about to say, and who could, together with the Spirit of God and his own conscience, testify for him that it was no lie: the thing he appeals for the truth of, is in (~~ROM~~Romans 9:2), that the salvation of the Jews lay near his heart; that it was no pleasure to him to think or speak of their rejection, but was what gave him continual pain and uneasiness: and his great desire for their good is expressed in a very strong and uncommon manner, (~~ROM~~Romans 9:3), the reasons of it are partly the relation they stood in to him, being his brethren and kinsmen; and partly the many privileges they had been favoured with of God; an enumeration of which is given, (~~ROM~~Romans 9:4,5), and foreseeing an objection, he prevents it, which might be made, that if the Jews were cast off, the promise of God to that people that he would be their God, would become void, and the preaching the Gospel of Christ to them of no effect; to which he answers by distinguishing between Israel and Israel, or the elect of God among them, and those that were not; wherefore though the latter were rejected according to the purpose of God, the promise and preaching of the word had their effect in the former, (~~ROM~~Romans 9:6), and that there was such a distinction, he proves from the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, who were both Abraham's seed; yet one was a child of promise, and the

other a child of the flesh, and were emblematical of the children of the promise, and the children of the flesh among that people; ([Romans 9:7-10](#)), and further confirms this by the instance of Jacob and Esau, who were born of the same parents, and were twins; and yet one was in the favour of God, and the other not; and that this was owing not to works, but to the sovereign will of God in election, he proves by observing that this was before good or evil were done by either of them, ([Romans 9:11](#)), and that this was notified to Rebekah before, ([Romans 9:12](#)), as appears from a passage in ([Genesis 25:23](#)), and by another passage in ([Malachi 1:2,3](#)), which is cited, ([Romans 9:13](#)), then an objection is started, ([Romans 9:14](#)), that if God loves one, and hates another, both being in equal circumstances, as Jacob and Esau were, he must be guilty of unrighteousness; which he answers and removes, first by a detestation of such a charge against God, and then by producing testimonies out of the books of Moses, proving both election and reprobation, as being not of the works of men, but of the will of God; the former of these he proves, ([Romans 9:15](#)), from ([Exodus 33:19](#)), by which it appears, that the choice of men to salvation is not according to the will of man, but according to the grace and love of God, ([Romans 9:16](#)), the latter he proves by the case of Pharaoh, ([Romans 9:17](#)), and the Scripture relating to that, ([Exodus 9:16](#)), and from both testimonies concludes, ([Romans 9:18](#)), that God's having mercy on one, and hardening another, are according to his sovereign will and pleasure; then another objection rises, up, if so, God has no reason to find fault with men that are hardened in sin, since they are according to his will, and in sinning do but fulfil it, and which no man resists; and this objection is formed in a very pert and sneering manner, and insinuates that God is cruel and acts unreasonably, ([Romans 9:19](#)), to which he answers, by putting the objector in mind that he was a man, a mere creature that started it, and that it was God against whom it was made; and by observing the folly and madness of replying against God, and the absurdity of such a procedure, taken from the consideration of the one being a creature, and the other the Creator, ([Romans 9:20](#)), and by instancing in the case of the potter, who has power over his clay, to form it in what shape, and for what use he pleases, ([Romans 9:21](#)), and accommodates this, both to the affair of election and reprobation, and to the business of the latter first, ([Romans 9:22](#)), where he observes the end of God in it to show forth his power and wrath, and describes the subjects of it, which clears him from injustice, and points at the patience of God towards them, which frees him from the

charge of cruelty, (^{<8102>}Romans 9:22), and then proceeds to apply the metaphor before used, to the objects of election styled vessels of mercy, and the end of the Lord to manifest the riches of his glory in them, and the method he takes to bring them to eternal happiness, by preparing them for it by grace, (^{<8103>}Romans 9:23), which is done in the effectual calling, the objects of which are both Jews and Gentiles, (^{<8104>}Romans 9:24), That it is the will of God that the Gentiles should be called, he proves, (^{<8105>}Romans 9:25,26), from some passages in Hosea, (^{<2103>}Hosea 2:23 1:10), and that God had chosen, and so would call some among the Jews, he clearly makes appear, (^{<8107>}Romans 9:27-29), from some prophecies of Isaiah, (^{<2102>}Isaiah 10:22,23 1:10), and then he concludes the chapter by observing the free and distinguishing grace of God, in the calling of the Gentiles, and the justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; that such who were far off from it, and sought not after it, should enjoy it, (^{<8101>}Romans 9:30), when the Israelites, who were diligent and zealous in seeking after a righteousness to justify them before God, yet did not arrive to one, (^{<8108>}Romans 9:31), the reasons of which are given, (^{<8102>}Romans 9:32), because it was not the righteousness of faith, or the righteousness of Christ received by faith they sought; but a legal one, and by works which can never be attained by sinful men: they sought after a wrong righteousness, and in a wrong way, because they stumbled at Christ, and rejected him and his righteousness; and this removes an objection which is suggested in the two preceding verses, that God is unrighteous in calling the Gentiles, who never sought after righteousness, and in rejecting the Jews that followed after one: and that they did stumble at Christ and his righteousness, is no other than what was foretold in (^{<2104>}Isaiah 8:14), and that whoever believes in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be saved, he suggests is a doctrine agreeably to (^{<2106>}Isaiah 28:16), which passages are referred to, (^{<8103>}Romans 9:33).

Ver. 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*, etc.] The apostle being about to discourse concerning predestination, which he had mentioned in the preceding chapter, and to open the springs and causes of it, and also concerning the induration and rejection of the Jewish nation; he thought it necessary to preface his account of these things with some strong assurances of his great attachment to that people, and his affection for them, lest it should be thought he spoke out of prejudice to them; and well knowing in what situation he stood in with them, on account of his preaching up the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and how difficult it

might be for him to obtain their belief in what he should say, he introduces it with a solemn oath, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not”: which refers not to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, but to what he was going to say; and is all one as if he had said, as I am in Christ, a converted person, one born again, and renewed in the spirit of my mind, what I am about to speak is truth, and no lie; or I swear by Christ the God of truth, who is truth itself, and I appeal to him as the true God, the searcher of hearts, that what I now deliver is truth, and nothing but truth, and has no falsehood in it. This both shows that the taking of an oath is lawful, and that Christ is truly God, by whom only persons ought to swear:

my conscience bearing me witness. The apostle, besides his appeal to Christ, calls his conscience to witness to the truth of his words; and this is as a thousand witnesses; there is in every man a conscience, which unless seared as with a red hot iron, will accuse or excuse, and bear a faithful testimony to words and actions; and especially a conscience enlightened, cleansed, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, as was the apostle's: hence he adds,

in the Holy Ghost; meaning either that his conscience was influenced and directed by the Holy Ghost in what he was about to say; or it bore witness in and with the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost with that; so that here are three witnesses called in, Christ, conscience, and the Holy Ghost; and by three such witnesses, his words must be thought to be well established.

Ver. 2. *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*] This is the thing he appeals to Christ for the truth of, and calls in his conscience and the Holy Ghost to bear witness to. These two words, “heaviness” and “sorrow”, the one signifies grief, which had brought on heaviness on his spirits; and the other such pain as a woman in travail feels: and the trouble of his mind expressed by both, is described by its quantity, “great”, it was not a little, but much; by its quality it was internal, it was in his “heart”, it did not lie merely in outward show, in a few words or tears, but was in his heart, it was a heart sorrow; and by its duration, “continual”, it was not a sudden emotion or passion, but what had been long in him, and had deeply affected and greatly depressed him: and what was the reason of all this? it is not expressed, but may pretty easily be understood; it was because of the obstinacy of his countrymen the Jews, the hardness of their hearts, and their wilful rejection of the Messiah; their trusting to their own righteousness, to the neglect and contempt of the righteousness of Christ,

which he knew must unavoidably issue in their eternal destruction; also what greatly affected his mind was the utter rejection of them, as the people of God, and the judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, he full well knew was coming upon them, and which he was about to break unto them.

Ver. 3. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, etc..]*

Some consider this as the reason of the apostle's great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart, because he had made such a wish as this, and read the words, "for I have wished", or "did wish"; that is, in my unregenerate state, whilst I was a persecutor of Christ, and a blasphemer of his name, I wished to be for ever separated from him, and to have nothing to do with him; for then I thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and this I did out of respect to the Jewish nation, and because I would not relinquish the Jewish religion; but oh! what a trouble of mind is it to me? what uneasiness does it give me when I think of it, and reflect upon it? But this can never be the apostle's meaning, for he would never have appealed to Christ in so solemn a manner, and took an oath upon it, for the truth of his enmity to Christ, and alienation from him before conversion, which everybody knew; nor was it anything strange, that whilst he was an unbelieving Jew, he should wish himself separated from Jesus of Nazareth, and always to remain so; and his having done this before his embracing of Christianity could be no evidence of his present affection for the Jewish nation, especially since he repented of it, and was sorry for it. But this wish, whatever is meant by it, is mentioned as an instance of his great love to his countrymen the Jews. Many have thought that his meaning is, that he had so great a value for them, that he could even wish himself, and be content to be eternally separated from Christ, everlastingly banished from his presence, never to enjoy communion more with him, or in other words, to be eternally damned, that they might be saved. But this is what could never be, and which he knew, was impossible to be done, and was contrary to that strong persuasion he had just expressed in the close of the foregoing chapter. Nor is it consistent with his love to Christ, to wish any thing of this kind; it would make him to love the Jews much better than Christ; since, according to this sense, he must wish to be parted from him, that they might be saved, and consequently must love them more than Christ: nor is it consistent with, but even contrary both to the principles of nature and grace; it is contrary to the principles of nature, for a man to desire his own damnation upon any consideration whatever; and it is

contrary to the principle of grace, which always strongly inclines to be with Christ, and not separated from him; in a word, to be accursed from Christ in this sense, could be no proper means of the salvation of the Jews, and therefore it cannot be thought to be desirable, or wished for. Some things are said indeed for the qualifying of this sense of the words, as that the apostle said this inconsiderately, when he was scarcely himself, through an ecstasy of mind, and intemperate zeal, and an overflow of affection for his nation; but this is highly to reflect upon the apostle, and to represent him in a very unworthy manner, when it is certain he said this with the greatest deliberation and seriousness; he introduces it in the most solemn manner, with an appeal to Christ, the Holy Spirit, and his own conscience, and therefore it could never drop from him through incogitancy, and an overheated affection. Again, it is said, that this wish was made with a condition, if it was the will of God, but that he knew was not; or if it could be for the good of these people, this also he knew it could never be: the best qualification Of it is to say it is an hyperbolical expression; and so if it is, it must be with a witness, being such an hyperbole, as is not to be matched in sacred or profane writings. The words of Moses are thought to be a parallel one, “blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written”, (^{<4333>}Exodus 32:32); but that is not to be understood of the book of eternal life; but either of the book of the law, as R. Sol. Jarchi expounds it, which God had ordered him to write, and his desire is, that his name might not stand there; or rather of the book of this temporal life, that he might die and not live. It remains then that these words must have another meaning. Now let it be observed, that the word **αναψευμα**, here translated “accursed”, answers to the Hebrew word **מַרְיָ**, which, with the Jewish writers, is one sort of excommunication in use among them, and the greater sort; the forth of it, as given by them, is very horrible, and shocking ^{f161}; (see Gill on “^{<4302>}John 9:22”); and so we may observe the word “anathema” here used is mentioned as a form of excommunication in (^{<462>}1 Corinthians 16:22 ^{<4008>}Galatians 1:8,9); of all such as love not Christ and his Gospel, and make it appear by their principles or practices, or both, that they do not, and so ought to be removed from the communion of churches. Now, taking the word in this sense, the apostle's meaning is, that he could wish to be excommunicated from Christ; that is, from the body of Christ, from the church of Christ, Christ mystical, as the word “Christ” is used, (^{<4621>}1 Corinthians 12:12); to be deprived of the ordinance of Christ's house, to be degraded from his office in it, and not to be so much as a member in it. He saw that these branches, the people of the Jews, were going to be cut off,

and no longer to be of the church of God; and such was his affection to them, that he could have wished rather to be cut off himself, that they might be spared; and this was an instance of great love to them, since, next to Christ, the church and the ordinances of it were exceeding dear unto, and highly valued by the apostle. Again, it is worthy of observation, that the Hebrew word **μῆρj**, which the Septuagint render by **ἀναψεμα**, the word in the text, is used for any thing devoted to God, and which could not be alienated to any other use or service; and if it was a man, or any among men that was devoted, it was not to be redeemed, but was “surely to be put to death”, (^{f162}Leviticus 27:29). Some have thought that Jephthah's daughter was put to death upon this law; but be that as it will, the apostle here may reasonably be thought to allude unto it, and his sense be this, that he could wish himself **ἀναψεμα εἶναι ἀπο τοῦ χριστοῦ**, “to be devoted unto death”, not from Christ, but “by” Christ; and some copies read **ὑπο**, “by”: I could wish that my dear Lord and Master, as if he should say, would appoint and order me to die, might this nation of mine but escape that ruin and destruction I see is coming upon them, as a nation and a church; I could be content to die the most accursed death, and be treated in the most ignominious manner, might they but be saved; a like expression is that of R. Ishmael ^{f162}, **^trpk yna l arcy ynb** “may I be an expiatory sacrifice for the

children of Israel”;

“which (says one commentator ^{f163}) he said, **^tbj Awtm**, “because of his love to them”; and it is as if he should say, all the punishment which is right to come upon them, I will take it on myself, in order to atone for them;”

and says another ^{f164},

“the sense is, he took upon him their redemption, and this he said, **wtbha bwrl**, “because of the greatness of his love”:

now for a man to die for his country, that a whole nation perish not, was agreeably to the sentiments both of Jews and Gentiles, and was the highest instance of love among men; “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”, (^{f164}John 15:13); and this is carrying the sense of the apostle's wish high enough, and not too far. The persons

on whose account he could have expressed this wish, are described by their natural relation to him,

my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh: he calls them his brethren, not in a spiritual sense, nor in a strict natural sense, but in a general way, as being of the same nation: it is a saying with the Jews ^{f165}, **μῦν αἰ ἀρχὴ ἰκ**, “all the Israelites are brethren”; for the same reason he calls them kinsmen; and these appellations he uses to remove that ill will and prejudice they had conceived in their minds against him, and to signify the ground of his affection for them: and he adds, “according to the flesh”, to distinguish them from his spiritual brethren and relations; for though they were brethren in a national sense, they were not all so in a spiritual relation.

Ver. 4. *Who are Israelites*, etc..] Which were their national name, as descended from Jacob, whose name was Israel; and it was accounted a very honourable one; (see ^{<1185>}Philippians 3:5 ^{<112>}2 Corinthians 11:22); and the very name they bore gave the apostle some concern that they should be cut off; and then he proceeds to enumerate the several distinguishing favours and privileges they had been partakers of:

to whom pertaineth the adoption; not that special adoption, which springs from eternal predestination, is a blessing of the covenant of grace, comes through the redemption of Christ, and is received and enjoyed only by believers in him; for all that were Israelites, were not in this sense the children of God; but national adoption is here meant, by which the whole body of the people, as nation, were the sons of God, his firstborn:

and the glory; either the ark of the covenant, which is so called in (^{<1512>}Psalm 63:2), according to Kimchi; or the clouds in the tabernacle and temple, which were called the glory of the Lord, and were symbols of his presence, the same with the Shekinah; and so Aben Ezra interprets power, the ark, and glory, the Shekinah, (^{<1512>}Psalm 63:2),

and the covenants; not the two Testaments, Old and New, but the covenant of circumcision, made with Abraham their father, and the covenant at Sinai they entered into with the Lord; some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, “the covenant”:

and the giving, of the law: **hrwt ^tm**, a way of speaking the ^{f166} Jews make use of when they take notice of this privilege; for it was peculiarly

given to them with great solemnity by God himself, through the disposition of angels into the hands of Moses the mediator, and by him to them; and on account of this, they reckoned themselves more beloved of God than the rest of mankind^{f167}

and the service of God; or “the service”, as in the Greek text. So the Jews^{f168} are used to call it **hdwb** [, “the service”; and false worship is called by them **hrz hdwb** [, “strange service”, which is the title of one of their Misnic tracts; and here it signifies the whole worship of God, in the whole compass of it, sacrifices, prayer, praise, etc.. daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly:

and the promises; both temporal and spiritual, especially such as related to the Messiah, and which now had their accomplishment.

Ver. 5. *Whose are the fathers*, etc..] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for, according to the^{f169} Jewish writers,

“they call none in Israel **twba**, “fathers”, but three, and they are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and they call none “mothers” but four, and they are, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah:”

their descent from these fathers was a privilege, though they valued themselves too highly upon it; but what was the crown and glory of all, and which they took the least, though the apostle took the most notice of, is,

and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; that is, either of the fathers, or of the Israelites, from whom Christ, according to his human nature, sprung; being a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of David, and the son of Mary; hence the Messiah is called **larçyd ahyçm**, “the Messiah or Christ of Israel”^{f170}:

who is described as

over all, angels and men, being the creator, upholder, and governor of them; and as having another nature, a divine one, being

God, truly and properly God,

blessed for evermore; in himself, and to be blessed and praised by all creatures. The apostle alludes to that well known periphrastic name of God

so much used by the Jews, *awh Æwr b çwdqh*, “the holy, blessed God”; to which, by way of assent and confirmation, the apostle puts his

Amen. Now all these particular privileges are mentioned by him, as what heightened his concern for these people; it filled him with heaviness and sorrow of heart, when he considered, that persons who had been partakers of such favours, and especially the last, that the Messiah should spring from them, be born of them, and among them, and yet that they should be given up to ruin and destruction.

Ver. 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect*, etc..] Or “it is not possible indeed that the word of God should fall”; (see ^{<49810>}1 Samuel 3:10); This the apostle says, partly to relieve his own mind pressed with sorrow, and partly to obviate an objection some might make, or prevent any mistake any might be ready to go into; as though from what he suggested that what God had said concerning the people of the Jews, was made void and without effect: for whether by the “word of God” are meant, the Scriptures in general, the prophecies of the Old Testament, these were now about to have their accomplishment, in the rejection of the Jews, and in the conversion of the Gentiles; or whether by it is designed the Gospel, this, as preached both by Christ and his apostles, had had its effect upon God's chosen ones among that people; it was become the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first: or rather by it may be intended, God's word of promise to Abraham, that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him; and that he and they should be heir of the world, of this and of that which is to come; particularly the heavenly inheritance, which he gave to him by promise; this was not made void, or had taken none effect: for this was made only to Abraham and his spiritual seed; and therefore though his carnal seed believed not, and for their unbelief should be cut off, this did not make the faith, or faithfulness of God of none effect:

for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; that is, they which are the descendants of the patriarch Jacob, whose name was Israel; or who are of the Israelitish nation, of the stock of Israel, belonging to that people; they are not all *I arçy ta*, “the Israel”, by way of emphasis, as in (^{<4922>}Psalm 25:22), or the “Israel of God”, (^{<4816>}Galatians 6:16), the Israel whom Jehovah the Father has chosen for a peculiar people; which Christ has redeemed from all their iniquities; which the Spirit of God calls with an holy calling, by special grace, to special privileges; the seed of Israel who are justified in Christ, whose iniquities are so pardoned and done away,

that when they are sought for they shall not be found, and who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: or in other words, though they are “Israel after the flesh”, (~~608~~1 Corinthians 10:18), yet not after the Spirit; though they are by nation Israelites, they are not Israelites “indeed”, as Nathanael was, (~~604~~John 1:47); they are Jews outwardly, not inwardly; they have not all principles of grace, uprightness, and sincerity in them: now to these spiritual Israelites, or seed of Abraham, were the word of God, the promises of God concerning spiritual and eternal things made, and upon these they had their effect; and therefore it could not be said that the word of God had taken none effect; though the whole body of Israel after the flesh were cut off and rejected. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “who are Israelites”; and the Ethiopic version, “they are not all Israel who came out of Egypt”.

Ver. 7. *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham*, etc..] The Jews highly valued themselves, upon being the natural seed of Abraham; and fancied, upon this account, that they were children, which the apostle here denies: neither

are they all children; as in the former verse, he explains in what sense they were Israelites, which he had mentioned among their high characters and privileges, as descending from Jacob, and in what sense they were not; so in this he shows in what manner the “adoption”, (~~600~~Romans 9:4), belonged to them, and it did not; being Abraham's seed, they were his natural children, and the children of God by national adoption; but, they were not all the spiritual children of Abraham, nor the children of God by the special grace of adoption; these characters only belonged to some of them, and which are equally true of Gentile believers; who being of the same faith with Abraham, are his children, his seed, and also the children of God: natural descent from Abraham avails nothing in this case, as is clear from the instance of Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the natural seed of Abraham, as well as Isaac; but he was not a son of Abraham in a spiritual sense, nor a child of God; he was not a child of promise, this was peculiar to Isaac:

but in Isaac shall thy seed be called; (see ~~0212~~Genesis 21:12). The meaning of which is, either that the progeny of Abraham in the line of Isaac should only be called, accounted, and esteemed, in an eminent sense, the seed of Abraham, and not his posterity in the line of Ishmael: agreeably to which the Jews say ^{f171}, that

“Ishmael is not **phrba l ç w[rz l l kb**, “in the general account of the seed of Abraham”; for it is said, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called”, (¹²¹²Genesis 21:12); nor is Esau in the general account of the seed of Isaac; hence, says R. Joden bar Shalom, in Isaac, that is, in part of Isaac.”

So another ^{f172} of their writers, on mentioning this passage, observes,

“that it is said in Isaac, **qj xy l k al w**, but “not all Isaac”;

or all that sprung from him. Or this has respect to the most eminent and famous seed of Abraham, the Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; who was to spring from him by Isaac, in the line of Jacob; and may likewise have a personal respect to Isaac himself, the son of the promise, a child of Abraham in a spiritual sense, when Ishmael was not; and to whom belonged the spiritual promises and blessings, and who was to be, and was effectually called by the grace of God; and may include also his whole seed and posterity, who, both natural and spiritual, were children of the typical promise, the land of Canaan, and the enjoyment of temporal good things; and the matter also children of the antitypical promise, or of those spiritual and eternal things, which God has promised to Abraham's spiritual seed, whether among Jews or Gentiles; and which always have their effect, and had, even when, and though Abraham's natural seed had a “lo ammi”, (³⁰⁰⁹Hosea 1:9), written upon them.

Ver. 8. *That is, they which are the children of the flesh*, etc..] This is an explanation of the foregoing verse, and shows, that by “the seed of” Abraham are meant, the natural seed of Abraham, who are born after the flesh, or descend from him by carnal generation:

these are not the children of God; that is, not all of them, nor any of them, on account of their being children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; for adoption does not come this way; men do not commence children of God by their fleshly descent; they are not “born of blood”, but of God, who are the sons of God:

but the children of the promise are counted for the seed; **tyrb ynb** “children of the covenant”, is a common phrase with the Jews; who reckoned themselves as such, because they were the seed of Abraham: thus in their prayers they say ^{f173} to God,

“we are thy people, *Ætyrb ynb*, “the children of thy covenant”,
the children of Abraham thy friend.”

And so they were the children of the covenant, or promise, which God made with Abraham and his natural seed, respecting the land of Canaan, and their enjoyment of temporal good things in it; but they were not all of them the children of the promise, which God made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, respecting spiritual and eternal things; to whom alone the promises of God, being their God in a spiritual sense, of spiritual and eternal salvation by Christ, and of the grace of the Spirit of God, and of eternal life belong; and who are the seed which were promised to Abraham by God, saying, “thou shalt be a father of many nations”, (*<OUTO>*Genesis 17:4): for which reasons, because these spiritual promises belong to them, and because they themselves were promised to Abraham, as his children, therefore they are called “children of the promise”: or rather, because as Isaac was a child of promise, being born after the Spirit, by virtue of the promise of God, through his divine power and goodness, when there were no ground or foundation in nature, for Abraham and Sarah to hope for a son; so these are called “children of promise”, (*<RODS>*Galatians 4:28), because they are born again, not through the power of nature, and strength of their own free will; they are not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, according to the will of God and his abundant mercy, by the word of truth, through his power, Spirit, and grace; and by faith receive the promises made unto them; and are counted and reckoned as “Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise”, (*<RODS>*Galatians 3:29), whether they be Jews, or whether they be Gentiles: and since now the promises of God are all made good to these persons, the word of God is not without effect, or is not made void, by the casting off the children of the flesh, or the carnal seed of Abraham, who were not children of the promise in the sense now given.

Ver. 9. *For this is the word of promise*, etc..] The following passage is the Scripture, which contains the promise concerning the birth of Isaac; which was the produce, not of nature, but of divine grace and power; and was typical of the regeneration of God's elect, who “as Isaac was, are the children of promise”, (*<RODS>*Galatians 4:28), for as Ishmael was a type of them that are born after the flesh, and are carnal men, so Isaac was a type of those, who are born after the Spirit, and are spiritual men: the promise is,

at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son; the passage referred to is in (^{<01810>}Genesis 18:10); which there stands thus, “I will certainly return unto thee, according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son”: some difference there is between the words as cited by the apostle, and as they stand in the original text; the word “lo”, is omitted by the apostle, nor was there any necessity to repeat it, since it was used only to excite Abraham's faith, attention, and wonder; also the phrase “thy wife”, is neglected, the reason is, because the words in Genesis are an address to Abraham, here the substance of the promise to him is produced; besides it was not only well known in the apostle's time, that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, but that as such she brought forth Isaac, wherefore it was not so very necessary it should be mentioned here; add to this, that it is not repeated in (^{<01814>}Genesis 18:14), which will justify our apostle in the omission of it: but the greater seeming difference is, that what in Genesis is rendered, “according to the time of life”, is by the apostle, “at this time”: some think, that there may be an emendation of the present original text, and suppose a various reading, and that the apostle, instead of *hyj*, “life”, read *hzj*, “this”, but there is no occasion for such a supposition, or to make this amendment: for the phrase “the time of life”, signifies the present time, the “nunc stans”; so R. Levi ben Gerson ^{f174}, understands this phrase, “according to the time of life”, *ht[tdmw[w tmyyq ayhç tazh t[k*, “according to this time which is now standing and abiding” and adds, rightly is this said, because neither time past nor to come are to be found, only the present time, the “nunc stans” and afterwards more than once explains it, of this present time, the next year: and so both R. Solomon Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra ^{f175}, expound it, *tazh t[k*, “according to this time”, the year following; that is, exactly according to this present time next year, or this time twelve month; besides, in (^{<0172>}Genesis 17:21) it is said, “at this set time”, and in (^{<01814>}Genesis 18:14), “at the appointed time”; all which support the apostle in his version.

Ver. 10. *And not only this*, etc..] This instance of Ishmael and Isaac, is not the only one, proving that Abraham's natural seed, the children of the flesh, are not all children, the children of God:

but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, “it was said unto her”, (^{<01912>}Romans 9:12), being in a parenthesis, “the elder shall serve the younger”. The apostle was aware, that the Jews would be ready to say, that the instance of Ishmael and Isaac was not a pertinent

one; since Ishmael was not born of Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham, but of a bondwoman, which was the reason his rejection, when Isaac was the son of promise, by the lawful wife, and that they were children of Abraham in the line of Isaac, and so children of the promise, as he was: wherefore he proceeds to mention the case of Jacob and Esau, which was not liable to any such exception; seeing they not only had the same father, but the same mother, Isaac's lawful wife; they were conceived by Rebecca at once, were in the same womb together, were twins, and if any had the preference and advantage, Esau had it, being born first; and yet a difference was made between these two by God himself, and which was notified by him to the mother of them, before either were born.

Ver. 11. *For [the children] being not yet born*, So says ^{f176} the Chaldee paraphrast,

“the prophet said unto them, was it not said of Jacob, *dyl yta al d d[*, “when he was not yet born”, that he should be greater than his brother?”

the Syriac version supplies, “his children”, that is, Isaac's; and the Arabic version, “his two children”. This shows, that the apostle designs not the posterity, but the very persons of Jacob and Esau; since as he speaks of their conception in the verse preceding, so of their birth in this: and though in the words of God to Rebecca, and which are urged in favour of the other sense, it is said, “two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people”, (~~01253~~ Genesis 25:23); yet this primarily respects the persons of Jacob and Esau, as the roots of their respective offspring; and only secondarily their posterity, as branches that should sprout from them; it properly regards their persons, and only in an improper, figurative, and metonymical sense, their seed; for in no other sense could two nations, or two manner of people be in Rebecca's womb, than as there were two persons there, who would be the authors of two nations and people; and whatever may be said for their respective posterity, taking their rise from one common father Isaac, or for their being chosen or rejected as nations, before they were in being as such, yet it cannot be said with any propriety, that “Rebecca conceived” their several offspring “by one, even by our father Isaac”, (~~01010~~ Romans 9:10): which sense well agrees with the scope of the apostle, which is to prove, that all were not Israel which were of Israel, and that all Abraham's natural seed were not

the children of God; which he could not better exemplify, than in the persons of Jacob and Esau; for to have instanced in the posterity of Esau, would have been foreign to his purpose, and not accord with the continuation of his discourse in the following verses, which entirely proceeds upon the subject of personal election and rejection, and with the scriptural account of the personal characters of Jacob and Esau; and from hence, as from many other passages, it may be concluded, that predestination, whether to life or death, is a personal thing, concerns particular persons, and not nations, or collective bodies of men:

neither having done any good or evil; Jacob and Esau were under all considerations upon an equal foot, were just in the same situation and condition, when the one was loved and the other hated; or in other words, when the one was chosen, and the other rejected; they were neither of them as yet born, and had they been born, their birth and parentage could have been no reason why one was chose and the other not, because in both the same; nor had the one performed a good action, or the other an evil one; so that Jacob was not loved for his good works, nor Esau hated for his evil ones; which confirms the truth of this doctrine, that the objects of predestination, whether to life or death, are alike, are in the same situation and condition: whether they are considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen, they are all equally such, so that there could not be any reason in them, why some should be chosen and others left; or whether in the pure mass, antecedent to the fall, and without any consideration of it, which is clearly signified in this passage, there could be nothing in the one, which was not in the other, that could be the cause of such a difference made: so that it follows, that works neither good nor evil are the causes moving God to predestinate, whether to life or death; good works are not the cause of election to eternal life, for not only, this act of distinguishing grace, passed before any were done, but also these are fruits, effects, and consequence of it, and so cannot be the causes thereof; God does not proceed in order branches of salvation, as in calling, justification, etc.. according to them, and therefore it cannot be thought he should proceed upon this foot in the first step to it; and which is ascribed to his free grace, in opposition to works. Evil works are not the cause of the decree of rejection, for this also being as early as the decree of election, as it must unavoidably be, was before any evil works were done; sin is not the cause of God's decree, but of the thing decreed, eternal death; otherwise all the individuals in the world being equally in sin, must have been rejected: it remains then, that

not any works of men, good or bad, are the cause of predestination in either of its branches, but the sovereign will and secret counsel of God: that

the purpose of God according to election might stand: the decree of God, which is entirely free, and depends upon his own will and choice, stands firm and immutable, and is not to be disannulled by earth or hell, for it stands not on the precarious foot of works:

not of works: did it, it would not stand sure, for nothing is more variable and uncertain, than the actions of men:

but of him that calleth: who is the unchangeable Jehovah; it stands upon his invariable will and immutable grace, whose “gifts and calling are without repentance”, (^{<512>}Romans 11:29).

Ver. 12. *It was said unto her*, etc..] To Rebecca, (^{<023>}Genesis 25:23),

the elder shall serve the younger, or “the greater shall serve the lesser”, an Hebrew way of speaking; so Japheth is called **l wdgh**, “the great”, or, as we render it, “the elder”, (^{<012>}Genesis 10:21); and the evil imagination is said ^{f177} to be **l wdg**, “greater”, that is, elder than the good, thirteen years; (see Gill on “^{<022>}Luke 22:26”); The sense is, Esau shall be a servant to Jacob; which is to be understood, not of temporal servitude; for in this sense he never was a servant to him; so far from it, that as soon as Jacob had got the birthright and blessing, he was obliged to flee from the face and fury of Esau; and upon his return after many years, he sent messengers to Esau in a very submissive manner, charging them after this manner, “thus shall ye shall say to my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob saith thus”, etc.. (^{<034>}Genesis 32:4), and when he found that his brother was coming to meet him, which threw him into a panic fear, lest he should “smite [him], and the mother with the children”, (^{<031>}Genesis 32:11), he prepares presents for him; and when he came to him, bowed himself seven times, and his wives and children bowed likewise; and the language in which he addressed his brother Esau, all the while they were together, was that of “my lord”: now if this oracle was to be understood of outward temporal servitude, it is strange it should have no appearance, nor any shadow of an accomplishment in the persons of Jacob and Esau, supposing it was to have one in their posterity; and indeed the completion of it, in this sense, is not very evident in their offspring. It is certain, there was a long train of dukes and kings in Esau's family, before there was any king in Israel; the posterity

of Esau were in lordly grandeur and splendour, when the children of Israel were grievously oppressed with hard bondage in Egypt. The single instance usually referred to, when the Edomites became tributaries to David, was near a thousand years after the giving out of this oracle; and this show of servitude did not last long, for in Joram's time they revolted, and so continued; and it is evident, that at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the children of Edom were prosperous and triumphant, and said concerning Jerusalem, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof", (³¹⁷Psalm 137:7): this servitude therefore is to be understood in a spiritual sense, of Esau's exclusion from the favour of God, and blessings of grace, signified by his being rejected from inheriting the blessing, which was given to Jacob; and it appeared that he was not a son, but a servant, by his departure, and pitching his dwelling elsewhere; which showed he had no interest in spiritual adoption, no right to the covenant of grace, nor was he an heir of heaven, all which were peculiar to Jacob: Esau was a servant of sin, under the dominion of it, and in bondage to it; whilst Jacob was the Lord's freeman, and, as a prince, had power with God and with men, and prevailed: Esau was serviceable to Jacob, both in things temporal and spiritual; as reprobates are to the elect, for all things are for their sakes, and work together for their good; Jacob's being obliged to flee from his brother, was for his good; by this means he got him a suitable wife, and large substance: his brother's meeting him on his return, which gave him so much pain and uneasiness, issued in his spiritual good; this sent him to the throne of grace, to humble himself before God, acknowledge his mercies, and his dependence on him, to implore his help, and plead his promises; and thus the oracle was verified in the persons of Jacob and Esau.

Ver. 13. *As it is written*, etc..] In (³⁰⁰Malachi 1:2,3);

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. These words are explanative of the former; they are of like import, and the one interpret the other; and show, that the former are to be understood in a spiritual, and not in a temporal sense, and of the persons, and not the posterity of Jacob and Esau; for though Malachi prophesied long after Jacob and Esau were personally dead, yet the Lord in that prophecy manifestly directs the murmuring Jews to the personal regard he had had to Jacob and Esau, and which had continued in numberless instances to their respective posterities, in order to stop their mouths, and reprove their ingratitude; and though he speaks of the nation of the Edomites, and to the posterity of Israel, yet it is evident, that he has a respect to the persons of Jacob and Esau, from

whence they sprung, when he says, “was not Esau Jacob's brother?” (~~300P~~ Malachi 1:2), now though an Edomite may be said to be brother to an Israelite, yet Esau is never said, nor can he with any propriety be said to be the brother of Jacob's posterity: it remains, that these words regard their persons, and express the true spring and source of the choice of the one, and the rejection of the other; and which holds true of all the instances of either kind: everlasting and unchangeable love is the true cause and spring of the choice of particular persons to eternal salvation; and hatred is the cause of rejection, by which is meant not positive hatred, which can only have for its object sin and sinners, or persons so considered; but negative hatred, which is God's will, not to give eternal life to some persons; and shows itself by a neglect of them, taking no notice of them, passing them by, when he chose others; so the word “hate” is used for neglect, taking no notice, where positive hatred cannot be thought to take place, in (~~240B~~ Luke 14:26).

Ver. 14. *What shall we say then?* etc..] A form of expression the apostle frequently uses, when he is about to introduce an objection, as is what follows:

is there unrighteousness with God? This is not an objection of his own, but of an adversary, which he takes up and returns an answer to; and which itself greatly serves to settle and confirm the true sense and meaning of the apostle in this place; as that it could not be, that election and rejection of men should proceed according to their merits; or that God chooses some for their good works, and rejects others for their wicked works, because no man could ever pretend to charge God with unrighteousness on this account; nor could it be that God chose and rejected men, upon a foresight of their good and evil works, for this also would not be liable to such an objection; nor that the Jews, having made the law of none effect by their traditions, despised the Gospel, crucified Christ, and persecuted his disciples, are therefore cast off, and the Gentiles, being obedient both in word and deed, are received into favour, for this likewise would not be chargeable with unrighteousness by men; but that two persons, as Jacob and Esau, and the same may be said of all mankind, being upon an equal foot, not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil, an inequality, a difference is made between them, by God himself; the one is chose, the other passed by: now in this is some show, some pretence at least, for such an objection; nor is it any wonder to meet with it from the carnal reason of men; wherefore we may be sure that the latter, and not either of the

former, is the true sense of the apostle; since only this, and not either of them, is liable to such an exception: let us attend to the apostle's answer, which is "first" in his usual manner, by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid: God is not unrighteous in his nature; nor in any of his ways and works; nor in this, in choosing some and rejecting others. There is no unrighteousness with God in that part of predestination, commonly called election; for this is neither an act of justice, nor injustice; not of justice, but of grace and mercy; of undue and undeserved grace and mercy, of mere sovereign grace and mercy; and is what God was not obliged to do; wherefore to choose some and not others, is no act of injustice; for injustice is a violation of justice, which has no place in this affair: if it is an act of injustice, it must be either to them that are chosen, or to them that are not; not to them that are chosen, to them it is an act of favour and good will, they are chosen to grace and glory, to holiness here, and happiness hereafter; not to them that are passed by, because they had no right nor claim to the grace and glory, which by this act are denied them, and therefore no injustice is done them. Every prince may choose his own ministers and favourites, and who he will have of his privy council, without doing any injustice, to those he takes no notice of; every man may choose his own company who he will converse with, without doing any wrong to such he does not think fit to admit to an intimacy with him; and yet men are not willing to allow the Most High that liberty, which every man daily takes, and may lawfully make use of: nor is there any unrighteousness with God in the other branch of predestination, commonly called reprobation, which is either negative or positive; negative reprobation is the act of preterition, or God's passing by, leaving, taking no notice of some, while he chose others: now the objects of this act are to be considered either in the pure, or in the corrupt mass; if in the pure mass, i.e. of creatureship, which seems to be the apostle's meaning, as being not yet created, made, or born, and having done neither good nor evil; no injustice is done by this act, for as it found them, it left them; it put nothing into them, no evil in them, nor appointed them to any, of any kind; man after, and notwithstanding this act, came into the world an upright creature, and became sinful, not by virtue of this act, but by their own inventions: or if considered as in the corrupt mass, as fallen creatures, sunk into sin and misery, which is the case of all mankind; since God was not obliged to save any of the sinful race of men, whose destruction was of themselves, it could be no injustice to pass by some of them in this condition, when he chose others; for if it

would have been no injustice to have condemned all, as he did the angels that sinned, whom he spared not, it can be no act of injustice in him, to leave some of them in that condition, which sin had brought them into, whilst he has mercy on others; unless to have mercy on any, can be thought to be an act of injustice: what unrighteousness can there be in this procedure, any more than in drowning the world of the ungodly, whilst Noah and his family were saved in the ark? or in raining showers of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities of the plain, whilst Lot, his wife, and two daughters, were delivered from the same? Positive reprobation is the decree, or appointment to damnation: now as God damns no man but for sin, so he has decreed to damn no man but for sin; and if it is no unrighteousness in him to damn men for sin, as to be sure it is not, so it can be no unrighteousness in him to decree to damn any for it: upon the whole it appears, that whatever show, upon first sight, there may be for a charge of unrighteousness against such a procedure of the Divine Being, there is no real foundation for it. The objection is to be treated with abhorrence and indignation.

Ver. 15. *For he saith to Moses,* etc..] That is, God said to Moses. The apostle goes on to answer to the above objections, by producing some testimonies out of the writings of Moses, in favour of both branches of predestination; showing, that the doctrine he had advanced, was no other than what God himself had delivered to Moses, whose name and writings were in great esteem with the Jews, whereby the apostle might hope to give full satisfaction in this point. The first passage he cites, is in (~~10339~~ Exodus 33:19).

And will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. This is produced, in favour of special, particular, and personal election, and to clear it from any charge of unrighteousness; and by it, it appears, that God bestows his grace and mercy in time, on such persons he has willed and determined from all eternity to bestow it; this, is clear from hence, for since all this is dependent on his will, it must be as this was his will from eternity, seeing no new will can possibly arise in God, God wills nothing in time, but what he willed before time; that this grace and mercy are shown only to some persons, and that the only reason of this is his sovereign will and pleasure, and not the works and merits of men; wherefore since this grace and mercy rise out of his own free good will and pleasure, and are by no means the creature's due, it most clearly follows, that God in determining to bestow his grace and mercy, and in the

actual doing of it, whilst he determines to deny it, and does deny it to others, cannot possibly be chargeable with any unrighteousness.

Ver. 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth*, etc..] This is not a consequence drawn by an adversary, showing that if this be the case, it signifies nothing for men to will or do, they may even sit still and do nothing, but depend on the mercy of God; but this is a conclusion of the apostle's from the above cited testimony, inferring from thence, that election, which is what he is discoursing of, is “not of him that willeth”,

nor of him that runneth: that is, is not owing to the will or works of men, to the desires, inclinations, and affections of their minds, or to the actions of their lives; these are not the motives, conditions, or causes of this act:

but of God that sheweth mercy; in a free sovereign way and manner, which he is not obliged to by anything the creature wills or works; he is at full liberty, notwithstanding whatever they will or do, to give his grace and mercy, when, where, and to whom he pleases; and therefore to give it to some, and deny it to others, can never be accounted an act of injustice, since he is not bound to give it to any. Some make the it to be the blessing of Isaac, which was not of the will of any of the parties concerned; not of Isaac who willed it to Esau; nor of Esau who willed it to himself, but had it not; nor of the will of the persons who had their desires, not of the will of Rebecca, who was desirous of it for her son Jacob, nor of the will of Jacob, who desired it for himself, though he had it; nor of either of them that ran, not of Esau, who made haste to hunt for, and prepare venison for his father, nor of Jacob, who ran to the flock, for two kids of the goats; but of God that showed mercy to him, who, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, had signified before to Rebecca, that “the elder should serve the younger”, (^{<1253>}Genesis 25:23 ^{<4912>}Romans 9:12): as the apostle had mentioned this so lately, it might still be in his thoughts, and he may allude to it; but election being what he is discoursing of in the context, that is the “it” here designed; and what is true of that, is true of salvation in all its parts, and therefore some understand it in the large sense of salvation; though by others so qualified and limited, as to spoil the glory of the text: some saying that the sense is, it is not of him that willeth and runneth wrong, but of the grace and mercy of God; but as no man would ever assert, that salvation is of him that wills and runs wrong, so the apostle had no occasion to deny it: others say, that it is not only of him that wills, and only of him that runs, but also of God that shows mercy; making man's will

and works joint causes with the mercy of God in man's salvation; and besides, as Austin ^{f178} long ago observes, according to this sense, the words might as well be read, it is not only of God that shows mercy, but of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, which no Christian would dare to say: the true sense is, that as election, which is the leading step to salvation, is not owing at all to the will of men, but to the good pleasure and will of God; and not at all to the works of men, that being done before them, and they being the fruits and effects of that, but to the free love, grace, and good will of God; so salvation in all its parts and branches, as redemption, justification, regeneration, calling, and conversion, faith, repentance, hope, love, etc.. and eternal life, is not to be ascribed at all to the will of men, nor at all to the works of men, but entirely and alone to the love, grace, and mercy of God through Christ.

Ver. 17. *For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, etc..]* **arq rma**, “The Scripture saith”, is a Talmudic ^{f179} way of speaking, used when any point is proved from Scripture; and is of the same signification with **anmj r rma**, “the merciful God says”; and so the sense of it here is, God said to Pharaoh; the testimony here cited, stands in (^(III)Exodus 9:16); where it is read thus, “for this cause have I raised thee up”, **Æytdm[h**, or “made thee stand”, “for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth”; and is produced by the apostle in proof of the other branch of predestination, called reprobation, and to vindicate it from the charge of unrighteousness: in which may be observed, that the act of raising up of Pharaoh is God's act,

even for this same purpose have I raised thee up; which may be understood in every sense that is put upon that phrase, unless that which some Jewish ^{f180} writers have annexed to it, namely, that God raised Pharaoh from the dead; otherwise, I say, all the rest may well enough be thought to be comprised in it; as that God ordained and appointed him from eternity, by certain means to this end; that he made him to exist in time, or brought him into being; that he raised him to the throne, promoted him to that high honour and dignity; that he preserved him, and did not cut him off as yet; that he strengthened and hardened his heart, irritated, provoked, and stirred him up against his people Israel; and suffered him to go all the lengths he did, in his obstinacy and rebellion: all which was done,

that I might shew my power in thee; his superior power to him, his almighty power in destroying him and his host in the Red sea, when the

Israelites were saved: and the ultimate end which God had in view in this was,

that my name might be declared throughout all the earth; that he himself might be glorified, and that the glory of his perfections, particularly of his wisdom, power, and justice, might be celebrated throughout the world. The sum of it is, that this man was raised up by God in every sense, for God to show his power in his destruction, that he might be glorified; from whence the apostle deduces the following conclusion.

Ver. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will,* etc..] These are the express words of the former testimony: it follows,

and whom he will he hardeneth; which is the just and natural consequence of what is contained in the latter; for if God could, or he did, without any injustice, raise up Pharaoh, and harden his heart against him and his people, that he might rise up against him and destroy him by his power for his own glory, then he may harden any other person, and even whom he will: now this hardening of men's hearts may be understood in perfect agreement with the justice and holiness of God: men first harden their own hearts by sinning, as Pharaoh did; what God does, is by leaving them to the hardness of their hearts, denying them that grace which only can soften them, and which he is not obliged to give, and therefore does them no injustice in withholding it from them; by sending them both mercies and judgments, which through the corruption of their hearts, are the means of the greater hardening of them; so judgments in the case of Pharaoh, and mercies in the case of others; (see ²¹⁶⁰Isaiah 6:10 ⁴⁵¹⁰⁸Romans 11:8-10); by delivering them up into the hands of Satan, and to their own lusts, which they themselves approve of; and by giving them up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, as a just punishment for their impieties.

Ver. 19. *Thou wilt say then unto me,* etc..] That is, thou wilt object to me; for this is another objection of the adversary, against the doctrine the apostle was advancing: and it is an objection of a mere natural man, of one given up to a reprobate mind, of an insolent hardened sinner; it discovers the enmity of the carnal mind to God; it is one of the high things that exalts itself against the knowledge of him; it is with a witness a stretching out of the hand against God, and strengthening a man's self against the Almighty; it is a running upon him, even upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; it carries in it the marks of ill nature, surliness, and rudeness, to the last degree:

why doth he yet find fault? The objector does not think fit to name the name of “God”, or “the Lord”, but calls him “he”; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word “yet”: what as if he should say, is he not content with the injustice he has already exercised, in passing by some, when he chose others; in leaving them to themselves, and hardening their hearts against him, and to go on in their own ways, which must unavoidably end in destruction; but after all this, is angry with them, finds fault with them, blames, accuses, and condemns them, for that which they cannot help; nay, for that which he himself wills? this is downright cruelty and tyranny. The objector seems to have a particular regard to the case of Pharaoh, the apostle had instanced in, when after God had declared that he had raised him up for this very purpose, to make known his power, and show forth his glory in all the world, still finds fault with him and says, “as yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?” (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 9:17); and yet he himself had hardened his heart, and continued to harden his heart, that he might not let them go as yet; and when he had let them go, hardened his heart again to pursue after them, when he drowned him and his host in the Red sea; all which in this objection, is represented as unparalleled cruelty and unmercifulness; though it is not restrained to this particular case, but is designed to be applied to all other hardened persons; and to expose the unreasonableness of the divine proceedings, in hardening men at his pleasure; and then blaming them for acting as hardened ones, when he himself has made them so, and wills they should act in this manner:

for who hath resisted his will? This is said in support of the former, and means not God's will of command, which is always resisted more or less, by wicked men and devils; but his will of purpose, his counsels and decrees, which stand firm and sure, and can never be resisted, so as to be frustrated and made void. This the objector takes up, and improves against God; that since he hardens whom he will, and there is no resisting his will, the fault then can never lie in them who are hardened, and who act as such, but in God; and therefore it must be unreasonable in him to be angry with, blame, accuse, and condemn persons for being and doing that, which he himself wills them to be and do. Let the disputers of this world, the reasoners of the present age, come and see their own faces, and read the whole strength of their objections, in this wicked man's; and from whence we may be assured, that since the objections are the same, the doctrine must be the same that is objected to: and this we gain however by it, that

the doctrines of particular and personal election and reprobation, were the doctrines of the apostle; since against no other, with any face, or under any pretence, could such an objection be formed: next follows the apostle's answer.

Ver. 20. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?* etc..] Or “answerest again to God”: some have been so weak and wicked as to suggest, that the apostle met with an objection he could not answer, or give a fair solution of, and therefore takes the method he does: but when the several things returned in answer by the apostle are considered, it will appear that he has taken the wisest method to silence such an audacious objector, and that he abundantly clears God from the charge of cruelty and unmercifulness. And he answers “first”, by putting the insolent creature in mind of what he was; “nay, but O man, who art thou?” etc.. Thou art man, and not God; a creature, and not the Creator; and must not expect that he, thy Creator, will give an account of his matters to thee, or a reason why he does, this or the other thing. Thou art but a man, who in his best estate was vanity, being mutable; thou art a fallen sinful creature, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God for thy sins, and darest thou to open thy mouth against him? thou art a poor, foolish, and ignorant man, born like a wild ass's colt, without understanding, and wilt thou take upon thee to confront, direct, or counsel the Most High, or tell him what is fitting to be done, or not done? “next” the apostle answers, by pointing out his folly and madness, in replying to God. To speak to God in behalf of a man's self at the throne of grace, in the most submissive manner, for any mercy or favour wanted, is an high privilege, and it is a wonderful condescension in God to admit of; and when a man, a good man takes upon him to plead with God on the behalf of others, of a wicked people, a sinful nation, he ought to set before him the example and conduct of Abraham, who in a like case acknowledged himself to be but dust and ashes, and more than once entreated, that the Lord would not be angry at his importunity; but for a man to answer again to God, which a servant ought not to do to his master, to litigate a point with God, to dispute a matter with him, is the highest instance of arrogance and impudence: “woe unto him that striveth with his Maker, let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth”, (^{238B} Isaiah 45:9): with their equals, with men like themselves, but let no man dare to “contend with God”; if he should, “he cannot answer him one of a thousand”, (^{380B} Job 9:3); for “he is wise in heart”, in forming all his counsels, purposes, and decrees; “and mighty in strength”, to execute

them; “who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?” (^{1890b}Job 9:4). Another way the apostle takes in answering the objection is, by showing the absurdity of a creature's wrangling with God about his make, and the circumstances in which he is made:

shall the thing formed, say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? reference is had to (^{2380b}Isaiah 45:9,10); Now as it would be a most absurd thing for the clay, was it capable of speaking, to say to the fashioner of it, why dost thou put me into such or such a shape and form? or for any piece of workmanship to say to the maker of it, he has no hands, no head, no judgment and skill; or for a child to say to its parents, what begetteth thou, or what hast thou brought forth? so absurd and unreasonable is it, for any to say to God, why hast thou appointed me to such and such ends and purposes, and has brought me into being in such a manner, and under such circumstances? There is a story in the Talmud ^{f181}, which may be pertinently produced here;

“it happened to R. Eleazar ben Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that he went from his master's house, and he was riding on an ass, and travelling by the sea side, and as he rejoiced exceedingly, and his heart was lifted up because he had learnt much of the law, there was joined to him a certain man that was very much deformed, and says to him, peace be upon thee Rabbi; but he did not return the salutation to him, but says to him “Raca”, how deformed is that man! perhaps all thy townsmen are as deformed as thee; he replied to him, I do not know, but go and say, *ynaç [ç ^mwai* , “to the workman that made me”, how ugly is this vessel thou hast made, when he knew in himself that he has sinned; upon this the Rabbi dismounted his ass, and fell down before him, and said unto him, I entreat of thee forgive me; he said unto him, I cannot forgive thee, till thou goest “to the workman that made me”, and say, how ugly is this vessel which thou hast made.”

Ver. 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay*, etc..] By the power the potter has over the clay, to shape it in what form he pleases, and out of it to make what vessels he pleases, and for what purposes he thinks fit, which will be most to his own advantage, the apostle expresses the sovereign and unlimited power which God has over his creatures; the passages referred to, are (^{2648b}Isaiah 64:8 ^{2400b}Jeremiah 18:1-6), in which God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in his hands; now if the potter has such power

over the clay which he did not make, only has made a purchase of, or has it in his possession, much more has God a power, who has created the clay, to appoint out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for his own glory, as he sees fit; even

of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. The apostle seems to design hereby, to point out to us the object of predestination to be man, as yet not made, but as lying in the mere mass of creatureship, signified by the unformed clay, before put into any shape; and is an allusion to the first creation of man, out of the clay, or dust of the earth, (~~OWITE~~ Genesis 2:7); for such a consideration of man best agrees with the clay, lump, or mass, not yet formed, than as already made, and much less as fallen and corrupted: for if men, in predestination, were considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen creatures, they could not be so well said to be made out of it, both to honour and dishonour; but rather since they were all dishonourable, that some were left in that dishonour, and others removed from it unto honour: besides, if this is not the case, God must create man without an end, which is contrary to the principle of reason and wisdom; the end is the cause, for which a thing is what it is; and it is a known rule, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, and “vice versa”: the end is first fixed, and then the means; for God to create man, and then to fix the end of his creation, is to do what no wise potter would do, first make his pots, and then think of the end of making them, and the use they are to be put unto. To make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, is for God to appoint creatures, which are to be made out of the same mass and lump, for his own glory; which end, his own glory, he determines to bring about by different means, as these following: with respect to the vessels of honour, whom he appoints for his glory, he determines to create them; to suffer them to fall into sin, whereby they become polluted and guilty; to raise and recover them, by the obedience, sufferings, and death of his Son; to regenerate, renew, and sanctify them, by his Spirit and grace, and to bring them to eternal happiness; and hereby compass the aforesaid end, his own glory, the glorifying of his grace and mercy, in a way consistent with justice and holiness: with respect to the vessels of dishonour, whom he also appoints for the glorifying of himself, he determines to create them out of the same lump; to suffer them to fall into sin; to leave them in their sins, in the pollution and guilt of them, and to condemn them for them; and hereby gain his ultimate end, his own glory, glorifying the perfections of his

power, justice, and holiness, without the least blemish to his goodness and mercy: now if a potter has power, for his own advantage and secular interest, to make out of the same clay what vessels he pleases; much more has God a power, out of the same mass and lump of creatureship, to appoint creatures he determines to make to his own glory; which he brings about by different methods, consistent with the perfections of his nature.

Ver. 22. *What if God, willing to show his wrath*, etc..] The apostle proceeds to clear God from any charge of cruelty and unmercifulness, by observing his conduct in time, both towards those he passes by, and towards those he chooses; for in this and the following verse, nothing is said relating to any act of God before time, everything of that kind being considered already. In this verse, the apostle considers the conduct of God towards the vessels of dishonour; and let it be observed, that these are called

vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; they are said to be vessels, and so no longer considered in the clay, in the mass and heap of creatureship, but as creatures formed and made, and brought into being; and so to be used as instruments in God's hands, to subserve his ends and purposes, and therefore called “vessels”; and not only so, but “vessels of wrath”, fallen sinful creatures, and so deserving of the wrath of God, and objects of his vindictive justice, in whom he may righteously display his wrath and vengeance: hence they may be so called, being as vessels filled with his wrath; as such who are the instruments and executioners of his wrath are called, in (^{<2316>}Isaiah 13:5), **wm[z y l k**, “vessels of his wrath”; and in (^{<2415>}Jeremiah 50:25); where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here: and they are moreover said to be “fitted for destruction”, as Haman is said to be by the Jews ^{f182}; whom they affirm to be the same with Memucan, and ask why is his name called Memucan? and answer, **twn[rwpl ^kwmç**, “because he was fitted for punishment”: so these are said to be “fitted for destruction”, that is, eternal damnation; not by God, for this does not respect God's act of ordination to punishment; but by Satan, the god of this world, that blinds them, who works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and by themselves, by their own wickedness, hardness of heart, and impenitence, do they treasure up to themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, so that their destruction is of themselves: a phrase somewhat like this is used in (^{<1312>}Psalms 31:12), where the Psalmist, under some dismal apprehensions of himself, says, that he was like **dba y l k**, “a

perishing vessel”, or “a vessel of perdition”; the Septuagint render it, **σκευος απολωλος**, “a lost vessel”. Now what is the method of the divine conduct towards such persons? he

endures [them] with much longsuffering; as he did the old world, before he destroyed it; and as he did Pharaoh, before he cut him off: God not only supports such persons in their beings, amidst all their impieties and iniquities, but follows and fills them with his providential goodness, insomuch that many of them have more than heart can wish; nay, to many he affords the outward means of grace, which they slight and despise; externally calls them, but they refuse, loving darkness rather than light, and therefore are inexcusable: now if after all this patience, indulgence, and forbearance, when he could in justice have sent them to hell long ago, he is “willing to show his wrath”; his displicency at sin and sinners, his vindictive justice, his righteous vengeance:

and to make his power known; what it is he can do, by the utter destruction and damnation of such persons; what man in his senses can ever find fault with such a procedure, or charge it with tyranny, cruelty, and unmercifulness?

Ver. 23. *And that he might make known the riches of his glory*, etc..] That is, his glorious riches, the perfections of his nature, his love, grace, and mercy, his wisdom, power, faithfulness, justice, and holiness; all which are most evidently displayed in the salvation of his people, here called

vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory. They are said to be vessels, and so considered as creatures, made and brought into being; “vessels of mercy”, and so fallen creatures, and by sin become miserable, for only such are objects of mercy: they are not called so, because deserving of mercy more than others, they are in no wise better than others, and are by nature children of wrath, even as others; but because God of his infinite goodness fills them with his mercy, displays it in them, in the redemption of them by his Son, in the regeneration of them by his Spirit, and in their eternal salvation: and these are by him “afore prepared unto glory”; to everlasting happiness, which he has chosen them to before time, and calls them to in time; to this glory he does not take them, until he has prepared them for it; which act of preparation does not regard the eternal predestination of them to eternal life, but an act of his grace towards them in time; and which lies in putting upon them the righteousness of his Son, and in putting his grace in them; or in other

words, in justifying them by the imputation and application of the righteousness of his Son unto them, and by the regeneration, renovation, and sanctification of their hearts, by his Spirit. Now what if God willing to make known his glorious perfections, by displaying his mercy to such sinners, and by preparing them for heaven in a way consistent with his holiness and justice, what can any man that has the exercise of his reason object to this? The whole of his conduct is free from blame and censure; the vessels of wrath he shows his wrath upon, are such as fit themselves for destruction, and whom he endures with much longsuffering and patience, and therefore he cannot be chargeable with cruelty; the vessels of mercy he brings to glory, none of them are taken thither, until they are prepared for it, in a way of righteousness and holiness, and therefore he cannot be charged with acting contrary to the perfections of his nature.

Ver. 24. *Even us whom he hath called*, etc..] From election the apostle proceeds to calling, the fruit and evidence of it, taking the same method he did in (~~8:30~~ Romans 8:30), with a view to treat of the call of the Gentiles, of which he afterwards gives proof from prophecy; whence it appears to be according to divine predestination, upon which prophecy is founded; for God foretells that such a thing will be, because he has foreordained it shall be. These words are explanative of the former, and show who the vessels of mercy are; they are such whom God calls by his grace. Election may be known by calling, as the cause by its effect, and that without an extraordinary revelation. This may as well be known, as man's adoption, justification, and the forgiveness of his sins; for as all the chosen are, and shall be called in time, so all that are truly called by the grace of God, are manifestly, and to a demonstration, the chosen vessels of salvation: if a man is satisfied of his calling, he ought to be equally so of his election, the one being demonstrable by the other; and for such an one to doubt of it, is his sin and crime. Moreover, the above phrase, "afore prepared for glory", is here further explained; to be afore prepared for glory, is no other than to be called, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; for this is the saints' preparation for glory, before they come to it; and hereby the means are expressed, even sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, through which God appoints his people unto salvation: now this calling is to be understood, not of a call to any office, as of Aaron to the priesthood, of Saul to the kingdom, of the disciples of Christ to apostleship, or of ministers to the work of the ministry; for persons may be called to the highest office in church and state, as Judas to:

apostleship, and Pharaoh to the throne of Egypt, and yet have no share in electing grace: nor of a call by the external ministry of the word, which is often slighted, despised, and of none effect; in this sense many are called, who are not chosen: but of a call that is by the powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God; a call that is internal, that reaches the heart, and not the ear only: a special one that is peculiar to God's elect, is by special grace, and is to special blessings, as both grace and glory; it is an high, heavenly, and holy calling, and is without repentance; between which and glorification, as between it and eternal election, there is a close and an inseparable connection. The objects of this grace follow,

not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; not all the Jews, nor all the Gentiles, but some of each; as all are not chosen, all are not redeemed, only some out of every kindred, tongue, nation, and people; so not all, but some only are called by grace: and this is not peculiar to the Jews, it reaches to the Gentiles also; and under the present dispensation, to the far greater number of them.

Ver. 25. *As he also saith in Osee*, etc..] (^{<2023>}Hosea 2:23), so “Hosea” is called “Osee”, as here, in the Septuagint in (^{<1603>}Nehemiah 10:23 ^{<2001>}Hosea 1:1,2). That is, as God says in the prophecy of Hosea, which was given by divine inspiration; and speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, as the spiritual Israel, after God had wrote a “lo-ammi”, (^{<2009>}Hosea 1:9), and a “loruhamah”, (^{<2006>}Hosea 1:6), upon the people of the Jews; and shows, that he had appointed some from among the Gentiles, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ; since he foretells their calling, long before they were in being; which could have no other foundation than his own eternal sovereign will and pleasure:

I will call them my people, which were not my people; his people they were before he called them, in some sense; inasmuch as he had chosen them for his people, had promised in covenant they should be, had given them to Christ as his people, and him to be a covenant to them: who, as such, made reconciliation for them, sanctified them by his blood, redeemed and saved them; but then they were not known to be the people of God, neither by themselves, who knew not God, and so could not know themselves to be his people; nor by others, by the Jews, by whom they were called the uncircumcision, sinners of the Gentiles; looking upon the character or the people of God, as only belonging to themselves: God had not as yet laid hold on them as his people, and claimed his right in them, and made known

himself to them as their covenant God; he had not avouched them to be his people, nor had they avouched him to be their God; as yet they were not his willing people, nor a holy people, not being formed for himself, by his mighty grace; nor a people near unto him, with respect to worship and fellowship, but afar off from him. His calling them his people, is his acquainting them with their relation to him, which he had taken them in to himself, of his own grace; for so it is in (^{<3023>}Hosea 2:23): “And I will say unto them which were not my people, thou art my people”: in the effectual calling, the Spirit of God is sent down into the hearts of his people, to witness their relation to him, and to work faith in their souls, to receive the testimony; when they reply and say, “thou art my God”, (^{<3023>}Hosea 2:23), and so they come to know themselves to be the people of God, of which they were before ignorant; and to be known others, by being made a willing people, in the day God's power upon them, willing to be saved by him in his own way, and willing to serve and worship him in his own ordinances, and according to his own appointment; and by being holy and righteous, having the characters, and enjoying the privileges of the people of God:

and her beloved, which was not beloved. In the text in (^{<3023>}Hosea 2:23), it is, “I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy”: hence the Vulgate Latin has added this clause to the text, though unsupported by any copy, or other version. The apostle is to be justified in his version, by the Septuagint interpreters, who have rendered the passage in Hosea, “I will love her that was not beloved”; and by the true sense of the word $\mu\lambda\alpha$ there used, which signifies to love in the most kind, tender, and endearing manner; (see ^{<3980>}Psalm 18:1); where the word is used and so rendered. The sense is not, that God's chosen ones among the Gentiles were not the objects of his love before calling; for their very calling is the fruit, effect, and so the evidence of love before. The love of God is from everlasting to everlasting, invariably and unchangeably the same; he had chosen them in his Son; he had made a covenant with them in Christ, had put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge; he had sent him to die for them, and obtain eternal redemption for them; and all this before he called them, which abundantly proves his love to them: but this love was not manifested to their souls; it had not been shed abroad in their hearts; they had no sensation of it in their breasts; the streams of that river of God had not as yet flowed into their souls; nor were they partakers of the effects of it in themselves; but being called by grace, they feel, they experience, and enjoy

that, and all the happy: fruits and effects of it; the loving kindness of God is let down into their hearts in the effectual calling, and with it he draws them to himself, as a fruit and evidence of his everlasting and unchangeable love to them.

Ver. 26. *And it shall come to pass that in the place*, etc..] This is another citation out of Hosea, and is to be seen in (~~3000~~Hosea 1:10), and the meaning is, that in those countries, as here in Great Britain, in the very selfsame place, or spot of ground,

where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; where were nothing but idolatry and idolatrous worshippers, and whose worship, works, and actions, declared them not to be the people of God:

there shall they be called the children of the living God; not only children of God, but of the living God; in opposition to their idol gods, their lifeless deities, and senseless statues of gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone, they fell down to and worshipped. The chosen of God among the Gentiles, were from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children; this blessing was provided, laid up, and secured for them, in the covenant of grace; in this relation of children were they given to Christ, and under this consideration of them did he partake of the same flesh and blood with them, and died, to gather them together, who were scattered abroad in the several parts of the world; and because they were antecedently sons by adopting grace, therefore the Spirit of God in effectual calling is sent down into their hearts to bear witness to their spirits, that they are the children of the living God, and to work faith in their souls to believe it; by which grace they receive this blessing, as all others, even the right and privilege of being the children of God; by this they claim it, and enjoy the comfort of it; and so are manifestly, both to themselves and others, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; though this will more clearly appear another day, than it does now.

Ver. 27. *Esaias crieth concerning Israel*, etc..] The apostle having produced proper testimonies in proof of the calling of the Gentiles, proceeds to mention others; showing, that some few of the Jews also were to be called, according to prophecy, founded upon divine predestination; which, though they are full proofs of the calling of some from among the Jews, yet at the same time suggest the casting off of the far greater number of them; and which is the apostle's view in citing them, as appears from what he says both here and in the two following chapters. The first

testimony is taken out of (²³⁰²Isaiah 10:22,23), and is prefaced or introduced with these words; which either express the great concern of mind and sorrow of heart, with which the prophet spoke them, even with strong crying and tears, seeing a remnant of them only was to be saved; or they show his heart's desire and prayer to God, "for Israel", as the words may be rendered, how that he cried to the Lord for them, entreated him with earnestness and importunity, and wrestled with him on their behalf; or they declare the presence of mind, the freedom of expression, the boldness and intrepidity with which he delivered this message to the Jews, which he knew must be ungrateful to them; in doing which, he run the risk of losing his interest in their affections, if not his life; and inasmuch very probably they did not choose to hear it, but turned away from him, he cried aloud, he spared not, he lift up his voice like a trumpet, as he is bid to do elsewhere, resolving they should hear what he had to say, from the Lord of hosts. This is a form of speech used by the Jews, in citing Scripture; thus, **j wx aybnh**, "the prophet cries"^{f183}, namely, in (²³⁰¹Isaiah 26:1-21), which is spoken of the same prophet as here; and again^{f184} the Holy Spirit **tj wx**, "cries, and says", in some certain passage of Scripture; and in another place^{f185} the Holy Spirit "cried", saying, as in (²³⁰³Joel 3:3): "they have cast lots for my people".

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea: this part of the testimony seems rather to be taken from (²³⁰⁰Hosea 1:10), which may easily be accounted for; since the apostle had just cited the words in Hosea, and so carrying them in his mind, transcribes this sentence from thence; it perfectly agreeing in sense with the passage in Isaiah he had in view, where it stands thus, "though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea", (²³⁰²Isaiah 10:22); that is, though the number of them be such as to be compared thereunto; though they are many as the sand of the sea, as the Targum, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra explain it. This was promised unto Abraham, and had its accomplishment in the days of Solomon, and in after times; they were for quantity, for number, as the sand of the sea, even innumerable; and for quality, being barren and unfruitful, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers:

a remnant shall be saved; that is, a few persons only; **raç arqy j [mh**, "few are called a remnant", as Kimchi on the place observes; these are the remnant among the Jews, according to the election of grace; the few that were chosen, though many were called by the external ministry of Christ

and his apostles; the little city, and few men in it, even the escaped of Israel, he that was left in Zion, and that remained in Jerusalem; the little flock among them, which were as sheep among wolves; the few that entered in at the strait gate, and found the way to eternal life; the few that shall be saved; and these shall certainly be saved, with a spiritual and eternal salvation. These, according to the prophecy, were to return to the mighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah; be converted to him, and so saved by him with an everlasting salvation: God had resolved upon it, whose counsel shall stand; he had promised it in covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; he sent his Son to save these his people from their sins, who is become the author of eternal salvation to them; the grace of God is efficacious and powerful enough, to make them willing to be saved by Christ, and to bring them to him, to venture upon him, and commit their souls to him, to be saved by him; and almighty power is concerned, to keep them through faith unto salvation: so that this little remnant, through the Father's everlasting and unchangeable love, the Son's purchase, prayers, and preparations, and the spirits grace, which works them up for this selfsame thing, shall be certainly and completely saved; though with respect to the difficulties attending it, which could have been surmounted by none but Christ, and by reason of their discouragements arising from sin, temptations, and persecutions, they may be said to be scarcely saved.

Ver. 28. *For he will finish the work*, etc..] This passage has some difficulty in it: some, instead of “work”, read “account”, and suppose it is an allusion to the balancing of accounts, when the remainder is cut off, which commonly is but little; and so regards the small number of the Jews that shall be called and saved, as before: others read it “the word”, and differently explain it; some understanding it of the incarnate Word, of his being emptied, and made of no reputation, of his being cut off in a very short time, a few years after he had entered upon his public ministry, and of the few persons converted under it; others of the law, of the cutting off, or abolishing the ceremonial law, perfecting or completing the moral law, and abbreviating it, or reducing it into a short compendium; others of the Gospel, bringing in and revealing a perfect righteousness, for the justification of sinners, which the law could not do; all foreign to the apostle's purpose. Those who think God's work, his strange work is meant, his work of punitive justice he will finish,

and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth, when he cut off and destroyed the greater part of the people of the Jews, and saved a remnant, seem to come nearer the mind of the prophet and the apostle's design, in citing this passage. The words as in Isaiah, I would choose to render and explain thus; **וְרַב הַמֶּלֶךְ**, “the absolute”, or “precise degree”, so Aben Ezra, interprets it, **מִצְוַת הַיְיָ**, “that which is decreed by God”, the decree concerning the salvation of the remnant, **הַיְיָ יִשְׁפַּח**, “he”, i.e. God “shall cause to overflow in righteousness”, (⁽²³⁰²⁾Isaiah 10:22), as an overflowing river; that is, he shall abundantly execute it, he shall completely fulfil it, to finish and cut it short in the most righteous manner, consistent with all his divine perfections; **כִּי כִּי הַיְיָ יִשְׁפַח**, “for the decree and that determined”, so Aben Ezra, **הַיְיָ יִשְׁפַח**, “the decree decreed” by God, “the Lord God of hosts”, **וְהַיְיָ יִשְׁפַח**, “shall execute”, accomplish, make short and full work of it, “in the midst of all the land”, (⁽²³⁰³⁾Isaiah 10:23), that is, of Judea: so that the words contain a most strong and invincible reason, why the remnant shall be saved; because God has made an absolute decree, concerning the salvation of it, which he will accomplish in the fullest manner, agreeably to his justice and holiness: the **λογος**, or “word”, the apostle from the prophet speaks of, that should be finished, and cut short and accomplished in righteousness, is the sentence, counsel, or decree, conceived in the divine mind, concerning this matter: hence as the decree of election stands firm and sure, not upon the works of men, but upon the absolute, sovereign, and efficacious will of God; so the salvation of his chosen people is not precarious, but a most sure and certain thing.

Ver. 29. *And as Esaias said before*, etc..] In the beginning of his prophecy, in (⁽²³⁰⁰⁾Isaiah 1:9).

Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed; the title and character the great God goes by here, is “Lord of sabaoth”, that is, “of hosts”, or “armies”; the Septuagint often leave the word untranslated, as here and elsewhere, as in (⁽⁹⁰¹¹⁾1 Samuel 1:11 17:45). He is Lord of the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, whom he brings forth by number, calls by their names, and them to praise him; of the angels, the multitude of the heavenly host, that do his pleasure, fight under him, and for him; and of the hosts of nations, of the several kingdoms of the world, who are all under his government, and among whom he acts according to his sovereign will and pleasure. Kimchi on the place says, he is called so,

“because of “the hosts above”, and because of “the hosts below”, who are the Israelites, that are called “hosts”; wherefore he would not consume us all, as we deserved:”

no, according to the council of his own will, he left them “a seed”; or as it is in Isaiah, a very small remnant”: and so the Syriac here, *adyrs*, a remnant”; both signify one and the same, namely, a few persons only: “a remnant” signifies a few, which remain out of a large number; and so does “seed”, which is reserved for sowing again, after the whole stock is sold off, or consumed: and the leaving of this small number designs God's gracious acts of reserving in the election of a people for himself; the calling them by his grace in time, and preserving them from general corruption; which if he had not done among the Jews, as Jarchi on the text says,

“of himself, and by his mercies, and not for our righteousnesses,”

we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha; the cities which God destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven, for their iniquities: had it not been for electing grace, they would have been like the inhabitants of these cities for wickedness; and the case would have been the same with us and with the whole world, had it not been for God's act of election, choosing some to holiness here, and happiness hereafter. The decree of election is so far from being a door to licentiousness, that it is the true spring and source of all real holiness, that has been, or is in the world; and had it not been for this, there would have been no such thing as holiness in the world; and consequently not only Judea, but thee whole world, were it not for this, must have been long before now, like Sodom and Gomorrah, in their punishment.

Ver. 30. *What shall we say then?* etc..] To God's calling of a large number of the Gentiles, and only a very few of the Jews, according to his eternal purposes and decrees; what can be objected to it? is he chargeable with any unrighteousness? must it not be referred to his sovereign will and pleasure? is it not an instance of his grace and goodness, that he calls and saves some, when they were all so wicked, that he might in justice have destroyed every individual of them? or what is further to be said, concerning both Jews and Gentiles? or what can be objected to what may be further observed concerning them? as

that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness; the very same persons among them, who are, called by grace, and are vessels of mercy,

before their calling were without a righteousness, stout hearted, and far from one; being without Christ, and destitute of his Spirit; they were ignorant of righteousness, of the righteousness of God, and of his law, and consequently of what true righteousness is; they were unconcerned about it, and did not labour after it, as the Jews did. They did not pursue and improve the light of nature, about God and things of a moral kind, as they might have done; but held the light and truth they had in unrighteousness, and indeed were filled with nothing else: and yet these persons

have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

The righteousness they attained unto, was not a righteousness of their own, not the righteousness of works, or a righteousness by the deeds of the law, to which the righteousness which is of faith is always opposed; nor faith itself, which is distinguished from it; but the righteousness of Christ, so called, not because that faith is the cause or condition of it, but because the discovery of it is made to faith; that receives it, lays hold on it, and exercises itself on it; by it the soul renounces its own righteousness, looks to, and depends on Christ's, and rejoices in it. These Gentiles being called by grace, "attained", "comprehended", or "apprehended" this righteousness; not by the light of nature, which makes no discovery, nor gives the least hint of it; but by the light of faith they apprehended it, as revealed in the Gospel; which faith they had not of themselves, but of God; so that the whole of this account is a wonderful instance of the grace of God, and abundantly confirms the observation made before by the apostle, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shows mercy", (~~ROM~~Romans 9:16); since these persons had nothing in them, disposing and qualifying them for a justifying righteousness, and yet attained one; and the grace appears to be the more distinguishing, by what follows.

Ver. 31. *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, etc..]*

The Israelites, the far greater part of the Jews, who were not called by the grace of God, were all very zealous of the law, called "the law of righteousness"; because the matter of it was righteous, it was so in its own nature; and because perfect obedience to it is righteousness; as also because they sought for righteousness by the deeds of it. They very violently and eagerly pursued after it, they tugged and toiled, and laboured with all their might, as persons in running a race, to get up to the law, and the righteousness of it; and yet Israel, with all the pains and labour taken,

hath not attained to the law of righteousness: some of them fancied they had, supposing an external conformity to it, to be all that it insisted upon; not knowing the spirituality of it, that it required truth and holiness in the inward parts; and that he that offended in one point of it, was guilty of all, and therefore could not be justified by it.

Ver. 32. *Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith*, etc..] The question is asked, why they did not attain to that, which with so much diligence they pressed after? the answer is, because, as they did not seek for righteousness in a right place, or object, they sought for it in the law, and the works of it, where it is never to be found by a sinful creature, and not in Christ, in whom only are righteousness and strength; so they did not seek for it in a right way, by faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and by which only true righteousness is discerned and received:

but as it were by the works of the law; not by works which looked like works of the law, and were not; but they sought it as if they expected their justification before God was to be by works of righteousness done by them; or as if it was partly by their own works, and partly by the goodness of God, accepting of them for a justifying righteousness. The Alexandrian Copy, and some others, read only, “as it were by works”; and so does the Vulgate Latin version: another reason, or else a reason of the former is,

for they stumbled at that stumbling stone; meaning the word of the Gospel, at which Peter says they stumbled, and particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; or rather Christ himself, who was “to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness”, (~~4023~~ 1 Corinthians 1:23).

Ver. 33. *As it is written*, etc..] In (~~2384~~ Isaiah 8:14 28:16); for the beginning and end of this citation are out of the latter, and the middle of it out of the former. This is an instance of **gl dm**, “skipping”, from place to place, concerning which the rules with the Jews were ^{f186}, that the reader

“might skip from text to text, but he might not skip from prophet to prophet, except only in the twelve prophets, only he might not skip from the end of the book to the beginning; also they might skip in the prophets, but not in the law;”

which rules are exactly complied with by the apostle. The beginning of this citation is out of (^{<2386>}Isaiah 28:16):

behold I lay in Zion. The “stone” said to be laid in Zion, is by the “Chaldee paraphrast” interpreted of a “king”; by R. David Kimchi, of King Hezekiah, and by Jarchi of the King Messiah; and is truly applied by the apostle to Jesus Christ: the layer of this stone is God the Father, who laid him as the foundation stone, in his eternal purposes and decrees, in his counsels and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, in the mission of him into this world, and in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel: the place where he is laid is Zion, meaning either literally Judea or Jerusalem, where the Messiah was to appear, whither he came, and from whence his Gospel went forth; or mystically the church, where he is laid as the foundation of it, and of the salvation of all the members thereof; though, through the sin and unbelief of others, he proves to be

a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; which phrases are to be seen in (^{<2384>}Isaiah 8:14), and are spoken of, and ascribed to a divine person, even to the Lord of hosts; and are by the Targumist thus paraphrased, “and if ye obey not”, *hyrmym*, “his word shall be for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and a rock of offence”, and in the Talmud^{f187}, it is said, that

“the son of David (the Messiah) shall not come until the two houses of the fathers are destroyed out of Israel; and these are the head of the captivity which is in Babylon, and the prince in the land of Israel, as it is said, (^{<2384>}Isaiah 8:14).”

So that, according to the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is properly made use of for this purpose by the apostle, who had seen the accomplishment of it in the Jews; who stumbled at the outward meanness of Jesus of Nazareth, at his parentage, the manner of his birth, his education, the mean appearance of himself and followers; at his company and audience, his ministry, miracles, death, and the manner of it; and so believed not in him, for righteousness, life, and salvation; and thus it came about that they did not attain, or come up to the law of righteousness, or the righteousness of the law: but

whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed; that is, who believes in Christ unto righteousness, who builds his faith, and hope of eternal salvation on him, the foundation God has laid in Zion, and at which the unbelieving Jews stumbled and fell; he shall neither be ashamed here nor

hereafter: he shall not be ashamed of his faith and hope in Christ; nor of Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; nor shall he be ashamed or confounded at his appearing, but shall be justified before men and angels, and be received into his kingdom and glory. There is some difference between the passage as here cited, and as it stands in (~~2386~~ Isaiah 28:16), where it is read, “he that believeth shall not make haste”: either to lay any other foundation, being fully satisfied with this, which is laid by God; or shall not make haste to flee away, through fear of any enemy, or of any danger, being safe as built on this foundation; and so shall never fall, be moved, or ashamed and confounded. Some have fancied a various reading, but without any reason. A very learned Oriental critic ^{f188} of our own nation has observed, that the Arabic words “Haush” “Hish” answer to the Hebrew word, **חׁוׁשׁ**, the prophet uses, and which have three significations in them, “hasten”, to “fear”, and be “ashamed”; the first of these is retained here by the Jewish commentators and modern versions; the second by the “Chaldee paraphrast”, and Syriac translation; and the third by the Septuagint, and the apostle; and they may be all taken into sense, for he that is afraid runs about here and there, and at length is put to shame and confusion.