

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 15

The apostle in this chapter pursues his exhortation to mutual affection and forbearance, notwithstanding their different sentiments about the use of meats, and observation of days; excuses his writing so freely to them, which they might bear with, in consideration of his being an apostle, especially an apostle of the Gentiles, and which office he magnified and fulfilled everywhere; gives them the reasons why he had not as yet been with them though he greatly desired it, encourages them to expect, a visit from him; and concludes with earnestly entreating them that he might have a share in their prayers: and first, as an inference from what he had said in the preceding chapter, he lays it down as a duty incumbent on himself, and all that were strong in the doctrine of Christian liberty, to bear with the infirmities of weak Christians, and not please themselves, but others, (~~615D~~Romans 15:1), which he enforces, from the usefulness of it, it being for the good and edification of others, (~~615D~~Romans 15:2), and from the example of Christ, who pleased not himself, (~~615B~~Romans 15:3), and which is proved from a passage of Scripture in (~~199D~~Psalm 69:9), the pertinency of which passage, and the citation and application of it to Christ and the present case, are vindicated from this consideration, that whatever was written in former times, was for the use of the saints under the Gospel dispensation, (~~615D~~Romans 15:4), and that the exhortation might have its effect upon them, he puts up a prayer to God for them, that such a temper of mind might be in them, which would be for the glory of God, (~~615B~~Romans 15:5,6), and then he repeats his exhortation, (~~615D~~Romans 15:7), that they would affectionately receive one another; which he urges by the example of Christ, who had received them to the glory of God; and that they might glorify him, and this was one way of doing it: and that this argument might have the greater weight with both parties, he observes, that Jesus Christ had a special regard to the Jews, and was their minister, sent unto them to fulfil the promises made unto their fathers, and had received them; and therefore though they were weak, they were not to be despised, grieved, and offended, (~~615B~~Romans 15:8), and as for the Gentiles, it was a clear case that God had had long ago a design of mercy

to them, and that they were to be, and were now received by Christ, and so under obligation to glorify God for his mercy; and therefore not to be judged and condemned, though they did not conform to the ceremonial law; and this he proves in (<sup><6150></sup>Romans 15:9-12), from several passages of Scripture in (<sup><1989></sup>Psalm 18:49 <sup><6153></sup>Deuteronomy 32:43 <sup><1970></sup>Psalm 117:1) (<sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 11:10), and closes this argument he had so long insisted on with a prayer to God for them, that they might be in the exercise of faith and hope; and, in the exercise of those graces, be filled with joy and peace, (<sup><6153></sup>Romans 15:13), and in order to prevent an objection that might be made to these prayers and exhortations of his, that they suggested that they were wicked and ignorant men, devoid of affection, and knew not how to behave to each other, nor to exhort one another, the apostle softens such a resentment, by calling them brethren, and by expressing his persuasion of their abundant goodness, knowledge, and abilities, (<sup><6154></sup>Romans 15:14), and excuses the freedom he took with them by observing, that he only acted the part of a monitor, (<sup><6155></sup>Romans 15:15), and the rather this freedom might be allowed him, on account of the great gifts bestowed upon him, qualifying him to be an apostle of Christ; and especially as he was an apostle of the Gentiles and so their apostle, (<sup><6156></sup>Romans 15:16), and on account of his office, gifts, and usefulness, he had reason to glory; though through Christ only, and in things relating to God, and not himself, (<sup><6157></sup>Romans 15:17), when he takes an occasion to enlarge on his ministry, and magnify his office; partly from the end and success of it, bringing the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ, (<sup><6158></sup>Romans 15:18), and partly from the means and causes of such success the preaching of the word, working miracles, and the power of the Holy Ghost; and from the extent of it, reaching from Jerusalem to Illyricum, (<sup><6159></sup>Romans 15:19), and from the difficulty which attended it, he preaching in places where the Gospel was never preached before, and which he chose to do, (<sup><6150></sup>Romans 15:20), and which was necessary to be done, according to a prophecy in (<sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 52:15), which he cites, (<sup><6152></sup>Romans 15:21), and observes, that it was his preaching in these many and distant parts that was the reason of his not having been with the saints at Rome, (<sup><6152></sup>Romans 15:22), but now gives them reason to expect his coming; partly because he had finished his travels in those countries, and partly because of the vehement desire he had to see them, (<sup><6153></sup>Romans 15:23), and besides, an opportunity seemed to be offering, he intending to take a journey to Spain, when it would lie in his way to come to Rome, and be for his advantage, (<sup><6154></sup>Romans 15:24), in the mean while he informs them what he was engaged in, to carry the

contribution of the Macedonian and Asian churches to Jerusalem, for the poor saints there, (<sup><6155></sup>Romans 15:25), on which contributions he enlarges, showing not only who made them, and for whom, but the source and spring of them, they arose from their good will and pleasure, (<sup><6156></sup>Romans 15:26), and yet they were debtors, and under obligation to do what they did; it was but a piece of justice and equity, since those churches had received of the spiritual things of the Jews, (<sup><6157></sup>Romans 15:27), and as for his coming to them, he acquaints them of the time that it would be, when he had finished the above service and labour of love, and when he should come into Spain, as he had before signified, (<sup><6158></sup>Romans 15:28), and of the manner in which he should come, of which he was fully persuaded, as that it would be with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, (<sup><6159></sup>Romans 15:29), and then with great importunity desires them to pray for him, and that very earnestly, (<sup><6150></sup>Romans 15:30), particularly that he might be delivered from his enemies in Judea, and that the saints there would accept of what he brought them from the Gentiles, (<sup><6151></sup>Romans 15:31), and that, if it was the will of God, he might come to them and be refreshed with them, (<sup><6152></sup>Romans 15:32), and then closes the chapter with a salutation of them, or a wish that the God of peace might be with them, (<sup><6153></sup>Romans 15:33).

**Ver. 1.** *We then that are strong*, etc..] Meaning not only ministers of the Gospel, who are men of strong parts, great abilities, mighty in the Scriptures, valiant for the truth on earth, and pillars in God's house; for though the apostle includes himself, yet not merely as such, but as expressing it to be his duty in common with other Christians; and the rather he does this, to engage them to the practice of it: but the stronger and more knowing part of private Christians are here intended; the Apostle John's young men, who are strong, in distinction from little children, or new born babes, that are at present weaklings; and from fathers who are on the decline of life, and just going off the stage; (see <sup><6112></sup>1 John 2:12-14); when these young men are in the bloom and flower of a profession, in the prime of their judgment, and exercise of grace; who are strong in Christ, and not in themselves, in the grace that is in him, out of which they continually receive; who are strong in the grace of faith, and are established and settled in the doctrine of it; and have a large and extensive knowledge of the several truths of the Gospel; and, among the rest, of that of Christian liberty:

*ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*; of them that are weak in faith and knowledge, particularly in the knowledge of their freedom from Mosaical observances: their “infirmities” are partly their ignorance, mistakes, and errors, about things indifferent; which they consider and insist on, and would impose upon others, as necessary and obliging; and partly the peevishness and moroseness which they show, the hard words they give, and the rash judgment and rigid censures they pass on their brethren, that differ from them: such persons and their infirmities are to be borne with; they are not to be despised for their weakness; and if in the church, are not to be excluded for their mistakes; and if not members, are not to be refused on account of them; since they arise from weakness, and are not subversive of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel: they are not to be treated as wicked men, but as weak brethren; and their peevish tempers, morose dispositions and conduct, their hard speeches and censorious expressions, are patiently to be endured; they should be considered as from whence they arise, not from malice and ill will, from a malignant spirit, but from weakness and misguided zeal, for what they take to be in force, when it is abolished: moreover, they are to be complied with in cases not sinful, as the apostle did in circumcising Timothy, (~~416B~~ Acts 16:3), and purifying himself according to the law, (~~420B~~ Acts 21:26); and so to the weak he became weak, to gain some, (~~410D~~ 1 Corinthians 9:22), and therefore could urge this exhortation by his own example with greater force; and which he represents, not only as what would be honourable, and a point of good nature, and as doing a kind action, but as what “ought” to be; what the law of love obliges to, and what the grace of love, which “bears all things”, (~~433D~~ 1 Corinthians 13:7), constrains unto; and which indeed if not done, they that are strong do not answer one end of their having that spiritual strength they have; and it is but complying with the golden rule of Christ, to do as we would be done by, (~~410E~~ Matthew 7:12 ~~416B~~ Luke 6:31):

*and not please ourselves*: either entertain pleasing thoughts of, and make pleasing reflections on their stronger faith, greater degree of knowledge, superior light and understanding; which being indulged, are apt to excite and encourage spiritual pride and vanity, and generally issue in the contempt of weaker brethren; nor do those things, which are pleasing and grateful to themselves, to the offence and detriment of others; for instance, and which is what the apostle has reference to, to gratify their appetite, by eating such meat as is forbidden by the law of Moses, to the grieving of the weak brethren, wounding their consciences, and destroying their peace;

these things should not be done; stronger Christians should deny themselves the use of their Christian liberty in things indifferent, when they cannot make use of it without offence.

**Ver. 2.** *Let everyone of us please his neighbour*, etc..] Every man, particularly his Christian friend and brother, whom he should seek to please in all things, and by all means lawful; he should carry it affably and courteously, should make himself agreeable to him; should condescend and accommodate himself to his weakness, and bear his infirmities, and deny himself rather than displease him. The Vulgate Latin version and some copies read, “let everyone of you”; but the other reading is preferable, and best agrees with the context, (~~4510~~Romans 15:1,4).

*For his good*; or as the Syriac renders it, **atbj b**, “in good things”; for he is not to be pleased, gratified, and indulged, in any thing that is evil: we are not to please any man in anything that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ, for then we should not be faithful servants of his; nor in anything repugnant to the commands of God, and ordinances of Christ, who are to be obeyed and pleased, rather than men; nor in anything that is of an immoral nature, we are not to comply with, though it may be to the displeasure of the dearest relation and friend; but in everything that is naturally, civilly, morally, or evangelically good, we should study to please them; and in whatsoever may be for their good, temporal, spiritual, or eternal: and

*to edification*: of our neighbour, brother, and Christian friend, for the establishment of his peace, the increase of his spiritual light, and the building of him up in his most holy faith; and also of the whole community, or church, to which each belong, whose peace and edification should be consulted, and everything done, which may promote and secure it; and among which this is one, every man to please his neighbour, in things lawful and laudable.

**Ver. 3.** *For even Christ pleased not himself*, etc..] He sought not his own ease, pleasure, profit, honour, and glory, but to do his Father's will and work, (~~4048~~John 4:34); and he always did the things which pleased him, in his obedience, sufferings, and death; and sought not his own, but his glory: moreover, what he did and suffered were not for himself, but for us; he became incarnate for us; he obeyed, suffered, and died for us; he came not to be ministered to, to be attended upon as an earthly prince, enjoying his own ease and pleasure, things grateful to nature, but to minister to others,

(<sup><4118></sup>Matthew 20:28); hence he appeared in the form of a servant, did the work of one in life, and at last became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, (<sup><3117></sup>Philippians 2:7,8): not but that he was well pleased in doing and suffering all this; it was his delight to do the will of God: it was his meat and drink to finish his work; yea, that part of it which was most disagreeable to flesh and blood, was most earnestly desired by him, even the baptism of his sufferings; and in the view of the salvation of his people, and of enjoying their company with him to all eternity, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame with pleasure, (<sup><3112></sup>Hebrews 12:2): but then he met with many things which were far from being grateful to human nature; such as the hardness and unbelief of the Jews, with which he was grieved, their scoffs and insults, reproaches and jeers; the ignorance, frowardness, and moroseness of his own disciples, whose infirmities he bore; and at last the sufferings of death, that bitter cup, which he as man desired might pass from him; but, however, he submitted to his Father's will, (<sup><4139></sup>Matthew 26:39); all which prove what the apostle here affirms. This instance of Christ, the man of God's right hand, the son of man, whom he has made strong for himself, the head of the church, the leader and commander of the people, bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not pleasing himself, is very pertinently produced, to enforce the above exhortations; who is an example to his people in the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty; as in beneficence, forgiving of injuries, mutual love, meekness and humility, suffering of afflictions, and patience. The proof of it follows,

*but as it is written*, in (<sup><3311></sup>Psalm 69:9);

*the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me*; which are the words of Christ unto his Father, as the whole psalm is to be understood not of David, but of the Messiah, as is clear from the citations out of it, and references to it in the New Testament; (see <sup><4117></sup>John 2:17 15:25 19:28), compared with (<sup><3311></sup>Psalm 69:9,4,21), and the meaning of them is, either that the reproaches which were cast on the house, worship, and ordinances of God, affected Christ as much as if they had been cast upon himself; which stirred up his zeal to take the method he did, to show his resentment at such indignities; (see <sup><4115></sup>John 2:15-17), or that the same persons by whom the name of God was blasphemed, his sanctuary polluted, and his ordinances reproached, also reproached him; and he bore in his bosom the reproach of all the mighty people, which were in great plenty poured upon him; they reproached him with being a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of

publicans and sinners, (<sup><4119></sup>Matthew 11:19 <sup><4174></sup>Luke 7:34); they said he was a Samaritan, and had a devil, (<sup><4188></sup>John 8:48): charged him with blasphemy and sedition, (<sup><4166></sup>Matthew 26:65 <sup><4232></sup>Luke 23:2); and when on the cross, mocked, reviled, and wagged their heads at him, (<sup><4173></sup>Matthew 27:39-44); all which he bore patiently, and reviled not again: moreover, by “reproaches” may be meant the sins of his people, by which the name of God was blasphemed, his law trampled upon with contempt, and the perfections of his nature, as his justice and holiness, dishonoured; and which fell upon Christ, not by chance, but by the appointment of God, and according to his own voluntary agreement; and which he bore in his own body, and made satisfaction for; which though he did willingly, in order to obtain some valuable ends, the salvation of his people, and the glorifying of the divine perfections, the honouring of the law, and satisfying of justice, yet the bearing of them, in itself, could not be grateful to him as such; neither the charge of sin, nor the weight of punishment; and in this respect he pleased not himself, or did that which was grateful to his pure and holy nature.

**Ver. 4.** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime*, etc..] In the books of the Old Testament; the apostle says this, to vindicate the pertinency of the above citation, and to prevent any objection that might be made against it; since whatsoever was written in that psalm did not belong personally to David, but to Christ; and what is written concerning him, is designed for the use and instruction of his people; yea, whatever is written anywhere in the sacred Scriptures,

*were written for our learning*; to instruct in the knowledge of Christ, of his person, offices, grace, righteousness, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; and of the great salvation and redemption he came to obtain, and has obtained; and to teach us the doctrines of grace, of pardon through the blood of Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, acceptance in his person, and eternal life through him; as also to inform us of our duty, and how we ought to behave both towards God and men:

*that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope*; the Scriptures are not only written for our present instruction, but for the ingenerating, encouraging, and establishing, an hope of eternal Life in another world; which they are the means of, under the influence of divine grace; since they give us a clear account of eternal life; of the promise of it

in Christ; of its being procured by him, and secured in him; of the means of enjoying it, through his blood and righteousness; of the declarations of God's free grace and mercy to sinners, and of the various instances of persons who have been made partakers of it; all which encourage to hope in the Lord, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God; believing we also may have and enjoy the thing hoped for, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures"; both which are encouraged thereby: the "patience of the Scriptures" is not a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence; and is of a different kind from that patience the writings of the Heathen philosophers define and recommend: the Scripture gives an account of the true nature of patience, in bearing all sorts of evils for Christ's sake; of the excellency and usefulness of it; and do strongly exhort unto it upon the best principles, and with the best motives; and are full of promises to the exercise of it, and furnish out the best examples of suffering affliction, and patience: "the comfort of the Scriptures" is such as is not to be met with elsewhere. These writings abound with exceeding great and precious promises, and excellent doctrines, big with consolation to the saints; and both serve much to cherish, support, and maintain an hope of eternal happiness; all which prove the divine authority, excellency, and usefulness of the sacred writings, and recommend the reading of them by us, and the hearing of them explained by others.

**Ver. 5.** *Now the God of patience and consolation*, etc..] These titles and characters of God are manifestly used on account of what is before said concerning the Scriptures, and to show, that the efficacy and usefulness of them, in producing and promoting patience and comfort, entirely depend upon God the author of them: from exhorting, the apostle proceeds to petitioning; well knowing that all his exhortations would be of no avail without the power of divine grace accompanying them. The words are a prayer. The object addressed is described as "the God of patience", because he is the author and giver of that grace: it is a fruit of his Spirit, produced by the means of his word, called the word of his patience. The Heathens themselves were so sensible that this is a divine blessing, that they call patience *ψεων ευρημα*, "the invention of the gods"<sup>f261</sup>. God is the great pattern and exemplar of patience; he is patient himself, and bears much and long with the children of men; with wicked men, whose patient forbearance and longsuffering being despised by them, will be an aggravation of their damnation; but his longsuffering towards his elect issues in their salvation: he waits to be gracious to them before conversion,



and after it bears with their infirmities, heals their backslidings, forgives their iniquities, patiently hears their cues, requests, and complaints, relieves and supports them, and carries them even to hoary hairs; and is in all a pattern to be imitated by his people. He is also the object of this grace; he it is on whom and for whom saints should and do patiently wait, until he is pleased to manifest himself, and communicate to them for the supply of their wants of every sort; and upon whose account and for whose sake they patiently suffer reproach and persecution; the exercise of patience is what he requires, and calls for, and is very grateful and well pleasing to him; to all which add, that he it is who strengthens to the exercise of it, and increases it; and which he does sometimes by tribulation; faith and other graces, being thereby tried, produce patience; and which at length, through divine grace, has its perfect work. Moreover, the object of prayer is described, as “the God of consolation”; all true, real, solid comfort springs from him, which he communicates by his son, the consolation of Israel; by his Spirit, the comforter; by his word, the doctrines and promises of which afford strong consolation to the heirs of promise, sensible sinners and afflicted souls; by the ordinances of the Gospel, which are breasts of consolation; and by the faithful ministers of Christ, who are “Barnabases”, sons of consolation, (~~406~~ Acts 4:36). The petition follows,

*grant you to be like minded one towards another*; which does not respect sameness of judgment in the doctrines of faith; though this is very necessary to an honourable and comfortable walking together in church fellowship; much less an agreement in things indifferent: the apostle's meaning is not, that they should all abstain from meats forbidden by the law of Moses, or that they should all eat every sort of food without distinction; nor that they should all observe any Jewish day, or that they should all observe none; rather, that everyone should enjoy his own sentiment, and practise as he believed: but this request regards a likeness of affection, the sameness of mutual love, that they be of one heart, and one soul; that notwithstanding their different sentiments about things of a ceremonious kind, yet that they should love one another, and cease either to despise or judge each other; but think as well and as highly of them that differ from them, as of themselves, and of those of their own sentiments, without preferring in affection one to another; but studying and devising to promote and maintain, as the Syriac here reads it, **atwywç**, “an equality” among them; showing the same equal affection and respect to one as to the other, and to one another; the Jew to the Gentile, and the Gentile to the

Jew; the strong to the weak, and the weak to the strong. This is what is greatly desirable. It is grateful to God; it is earnestly wished for by the ministers of the Gospel: and is pleasant and delightful to all good men; but it is God alone that can give and continue such a Spirit: this the apostle knew, and therefore prays that he would “grant” it: and for which request there is a foundation for faith and hope concerning it; since God has promised he will give his people one heart, and one way, as to fear him, so to love one another. The rule or pattern, according to which this is desired, is next expressed,

*according to Christ Jesus*; according to the doctrine of Christ, which teaches, directs, and engages, as to sameness of judgment and practice, so to mutual love and affection; and according to the new commandment of Christ, which obliges to love one another; and according to the example of Christ, who is the great pattern of patience and forbearance, of meekness and humility, of condescension and goodness, and of equal love and affection to all his members.

**Ver. 6.** *That ye may with one mind and one mouth*; etc.] This is the end for which the above request is made, and shows, that a cordial and sincere affection for one another is necessary to the worshipping of God with one consent, to a joining together in acts of religious service, both in praying to God, and in praising of him, which latter seems here chiefly designed; for how should there be an agreement of heart and voice, of mind and mouth, in praising God, unless there is a singleness of heart, and oneness of affection? This is necessary in order to

*glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Syriac and Arabic versions read, God “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; leaving out, the copulative, which we translate “even”, but may as well be rendered “and”; and be read, as by some, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who prepared the human nature for him, anointed it with the Holy Spirit, supported it in life, in sufferings and death, and glorified it at his own right hand; and in which nature Christ exercised every grace on him, as faith, hope, and love; discharged every duty to him, worshipped him, prayed unto him, and was in all things obedient to his will: and God is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for as man he had no father. Now he is “glorified” when the perfections of his nature are ascribed unto him; when notice is taken of the works of his hands, and the glory of his majesty, which appears in them;

when praise is offered up, and thanks given for all mercies, temporal and spiritual, he bestows on his people; when they join together in the solemn worship of him, presenting their bodies, and giving up their hearts unto him; when they unite in praying to him, and singing his praise; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to their profession of him.

**Ver. 7.** *Wherefore receive ye one another*, etc..] Into your hearts and affections; embrace one another cordially, the Jew the Gentile, the Gentile the Jew, the strong brother the weak, the weak the strong:

*as Christ also received us.* The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read “you”. Both Jews and Gentiles, as appears from the following verses. Christ received all the chosen ones into his heart's love and affection from eternity; he received them in the council of peace, and when the covenant of grace was made at his Father's hands, in the most tender manner, in order to take the care of them, preserve and save them; he assumed their nature, took upon him their sins, and sustained their persons in time, when he became incarnate, and suffered and died for them; and he receives them in the effectual calling on their coming to him, which he encourages by assuring them, that he will in no wise cast them out; so far is he from it, that he embraces them with open arms, and in the most affectionate manner receives them, though sinners, and eats with them; and notwithstanding all their unworthiness, sins, and transgressions:

*to the glory of God:* that is, either in order to bring them to the enjoyment of eternal life and happiness; which is sometimes so called, because of the glory that shall be beheld by the saints, be revealed in them, and put upon them, both in soul and body; and which is all of God's preparing and bestowing, and will lie in the vision and enjoyment of him: for this they were chosen in Christ, given to him, and received by him before the world began; and that they might enjoy it, Christ came into this world, took on him their persons, and died in their stead; and to this they are called by his grace with an holy calling; and when he has guided them with his counsel through this world, he will receive them to this glory: or else by “the glory of God” is meant the glorifying of God, the perfections of God, as his wisdom, power, faithfulness, truth, justice, holiness, love, grace, and mercy, and the like; which is done by Christ's becoming the surety, and Mediator of the new covenant, (~~8012~~ Hebrews 7:22 8:6 9:15 12:24), by his assumption of human nature, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and by obtaining redemption for his people: and the force of the apostle's

exhortation and argument is, that as Christ has received his people both in eternity and time, in so tender a manner, though unworthy, whereby he has glorified God, which was the principal end in view, and next to that the glorifying of them; so it becomes them to be like minded to one another, (<sup><4515></sup>Romans 15:5), and affectionately receive and embrace each other, that so they may join together in glorifying the God and Father of Christ also, (<sup><4515></sup>Romans 15:6).

**Ver. 8.** *Now I say*, etc.] Or affirm that Christ has received both Jews and Gentiles: that he has received the Jews, and therefore they are not to be despised, though they are weak, appears from hence,

*that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision*; he is rightly called a minister, for this was the end of his coming into the world, and the whole of his work in it was not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others, (<sup><4113></sup>Matthew 20:28 <sup><4105></sup>Mark 10:45), both in life and at death. This character agrees with him in all his offices; as King he ministers judgment to the people; and as priest he is the minister of the true tabernacle of the human nature, (<sup><5812></sup>Hebrews 8:2), in which he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, and now in it makes intercession for them; but here it is expressive of his prophetic office, in which he is such a minister as never was before, or since, or ever will be; if we consider the dignity of his person, being the Son of God; the greatness of his qualifications, having the Spirit without measure; the nature of his doctrines, which were amazing words of grace and truth; and the manner of his delivery, which was with authority; and that all other ministers receive their mission, qualifications, doctrine and success from him: he is styled a minister of “the circumcision”, not literally considered, as if he administered circumcision to any, which he did not; he was indeed subject to it as a son of Abraham, as a Jew by birth, as under the law, and in order to fulfil all righteousness, (<sup><4115></sup>Matthew 3:15), and to show that he was truly man, and that he had regard to the people and ordinances of the Old Testament, as he showed by baptism he had to those of the New, and to signify our cleansing and atonement by his blood; but circumcision is either to be understood in a spiritual sense of circumcision in the Spirit, and not in the flesh, with which the true circumcision, or believers in Christ, are circumcised in him, through his circumcision; or rather the word here is to be taken metonymically, for the uncircumcised Jews, as it often is in this epistle; (see <sup><4112></sup>Romans 2:26 3:30 4:9). So that the meaning is, that Christ was their minister and preacher, just as Peter is said to have the apostleship of the

circumcision, (~~ROM~~ Galatians 2:8), or to be the apostle of the Jews; as Paul was of the Gentiles, (~~ROM~~ Romans 11:13), and to have the Gospel of the circumcision committed to him, it being his province to preach it to them, (~~ROM~~ Galatians 2:7,8), Christ as a minister or preacher in the personal discharge of his prophetic office, was sent only to the Jews; among them he lived, and to them he only preached; nor did he allow his apostles to preach to any other till after his resurrection; and which is a manifest proof that he received the Jews, and took them under his care, and showed a particular regard unto them: the ends of his being a minister to them were,

*for the truth of God*; to preach the Gospel of salvation, the word of truth unto them, for which he was promised and sent; and in doing of which he declared the righteousness, faithfulness, loving kindness, and truth of God unto them:

*and to confirm the promises made unto the fathers*; the fathers of the world, Adam, Noah, etc.. or rather the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; concerning the Messiah's being the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, and of David; concerning the coming of Shiloh, the raising up of the great prophet among the Jews, etc.. all which promises are yea and amen in Christ, ratified and fulfilled in him.

**Ver. 9.** *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*, etc..] In choosing them in Christ as vessels of mercy, and in redeeming them by Christ as well as the Jews, and in regenerating and calling them by his abundant grace; and which as they clearly show that Christ has received them, and therefore are not to be censured and judged as irreligious persons, because of the use of their Christian liberty; so these things lay them under obligations to glorify God, to show forth his praise both by lip and life, since what they enjoy is not by promise, as the Jews, but of mere mercy; not but that promises arise from grace and mercy, though the accomplishment of them is owing to truth and faithfulness; but the Gentiles had no promises made to them, and yet obtained mercy, though there were many promises made concerning them, and many oracles and predictions in favour of them stood on divine record; some of which the apostle here produces to prove what he had asserted, that Christ had received them, and they were bound to glorify God on that account:

*as it is written*, in (~~PSA~~ Psalm 18:49);

*for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name*; which words are not spoken unto God by David, literally, considered, but as representing the Messiah; for David when he penned this Psalm, was in the decline of life; the next account after this is of his last dying words, (<sup><4231></sup>2 Samuel 23:1); nor could he hope to praise God among the Gentiles, nor did he in person, but in his Son the Messiah. These words are the words of Christ unto his Father, who in the title of the psalm is called “the servant of God”, he being the Mediator eminently; he is represented as encompassed with the sorrows and snares of death and the grave, which agree with Jesus when in the garden, and on the cross. God is all along in it spoken as his helper and deliverer, as he was to Christ in his human nature, having promised to be so, and on which he depended; and the person, the subject of the psalm, is a victorious person, one that has got the conquest over all enemies, which is in the fullest sense true of the Messiah, who has overcome the world, made an end of sin, destroyed Satan, spoiled principalities and powers, and abolished death; and particularly is said to be the head of the Heathen, and they to be voluntary subjects to him, (<sup><4983></sup>Psalm 18:43,44), which is expressed in much the same language as the like things are in (<sup><2584></sup>Isaiah 55:4,5); which is so manifest a prophecy of the Messiah; add to all which, that the Lord's anointed, the King Messiah, and who is called David, is expressly mentioned in the words following these that are cited, and which are applied by the Jews <sup>r262</sup> themselves to the Messiah; as is (<sup><4982></sup>Psalm 18:32) paraphrased of him, by the Targumist upon it: what is here said by the Messiah to God, is that he would “confess to him among the Gentiles”; which is to be understood not of confession of sin, or of a confession of faith in him; but of praise and thanksgiving, a celebration of his perfections, particularly his, race, mercy, and goodness; ascribing honour and glory to him, either for the conversion of the Gentiles, as he did in the believing Jews, (<sup><4413></sup>Acts 11:18), or by the mouth of the Gentiles, for what God had done in bringing the Gospel to them, (<sup><4433></sup>Acts 13:48), or among them, by his apostles and ministers of the Gospel being made very successful among them, and made to triumph in Christ, whilst they diffused the savour of his knowledge in every place. The word “Lord” is omitted in this citation, though it appears in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens's copies: “and sing unto thy name”; psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the glory of his grace, as in all the churches of the Gentiles, to which they are directed by the Spirit of Christ, (<sup><4659></sup>Ephesians 5:19 <sup><5186></sup>Colossians 3:16).

**Ver. 10.** *And again he saith*, etc..] God or Christ, in (~~1038~~ Deuteronomy 32:43);

*rejoice ye Gentiles with his people*; which from the Hebrew text are by some rendered, “rejoice his people O ye Gentiles”; to which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, who render it, “praise O ye nations his people”; or as some copies of the former, “the judgment of his people”; and the latter adds, the house of Israel. The note of R. Sol. Jarchi on the text is,

“at that time the nations shall praise Israel; see what is the praise of this people that cleave unto the Lord, etc..”

But the design of this song is to praise God, and not the people of Israel; who in it are severely reprov'd for their many iniquities, and especially their very great ingratitude to God, and are threatened with the heaviest judgments. This is seen by other Jewish writers, who interpret the words accordingly, as R. Aben Ezra does, whose note is

“then shall they praise him, when God shall avenge their blood;”

and to this sense is the Jerusalem Targum,

“praise before him O ye people, praise him O his people of the house of Israel;”

but the words may be better translated either thus, “rejoice O ye nations, his people”; that is, ye Gentiles who are his people, whom God has taken into his covenant, and whom he will declare as such in his own time, which time was now come, and therefore had reason to rejoice; (see ~~1011~~ 1 Peter 2:9,10); or thus, “rejoice ye Gentiles, and his people”; let both Jews and Gentiles rejoice; let them rejoice together when they come to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises and privileges; when they shall be together in one fold, under one shepherd; and especially when the fulness of each of them is brought in, and God has avenged himself of his and their enemies; and which agrees with the apostle's sense, and whose version is supported by the Septuagint interpreters; and his supplement is to be justified, there only wanting a copulative in the Hebrew text, which is often the case in that language, and which may easily be supplied by “and” or “with”; as it is with the latter by the apostle, in perfect agreement with the sense of the words.

**Ver. 11.** *And again*, etc..] It is written in (<sup>4950b</sup>Psalm 117:1),

*praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people*; that is, praise him both Jews and Gentiles, for his merciful kindness and truth, as in (<sup>4610b</sup>Romans 15:2); the Gentiles for his mercy in choosing, redeeming, and calling them, as before; and the Jews for his truth and faithfulness in the fulfilment of his praises. R. David Kimchi on this psalm observes, that

“it consists of two verses only, and that it belongs **j yçmh twmyl** , “to the days of the Messiah”; and intimates, by the composition of it in two verses only, that all people shall be divided into two parts, or be on two sides, Israel shall be in their law, and all the nations in seven precepts,”

i.e. of Noah.

**Ver. 12.** *And again Esaias saith*, etc..] In (<sup>2310b</sup>Isaiah 11:10);

*there shall be a root of Jesse*. This prophecy is applied to the Messiah by the Jews <sup>f263</sup>, who say,

“that when the King Messiah is revealed, there shall be gathered to him all the nations of the world, so that that Scripture shall be fulfilled which is written, “there shall be a root of Jesse”, etc..”

This character, “the root of Jesse”, may be understood of Christ with respect to his divine nature, who, as God, was before Jesse, and the author of his being, as of all creatures; just in such sense as he is called “the root and offspring of David”, (<sup>4610b</sup>Revelation 5:5 22:16); the root of David, as he is God, and the offspring of David, as he is man; unless both are to be interpreted of his human nature, as the phrase here also may be, and denote his descent from Jesse as man; and so the Jewish writers interpret it as well as some Christian ones. This is R. David Kimchi's comment;

““and there shall be a root of Jesse”; the meaning is, **yçy çrçm axwyh**, “which goes out from the root of Jesse”, according to (<sup>2310b</sup>Isaiah 11:1), for “Jesse” is the root. And so the Targum of Jonathan, **yçyd hyrb rb**, “the son's son of Jesse”;

that is, David's son, the King Messiah, who sprung from Jesse's family, when that family was very low and mean, like to a tree cut down to its roots, and to a root in a dry ground; out of which sprung the man the



branch, David's son and Lord. This character may be applied to Christ as Mediator, who as a root is unseen and unknown to carnal men, and mean, abject, and of no account in the eyes of the world; the root that not only bears Jesse, David, and other good men, but all the branches of God's elect, from whom they have their beings, both in a natural and spiritual sense; which communicates life and nourishment to them; in whom their life is hid, and is safe when scarcely to be discerned in them; and from whom they have all their fruitfulness, and to whom is owing their perseverance in faith and holiness.

*And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles*; or, as the Syriac version, “and he that shall rise shall be a prince unto the Gentiles”; or, as the Arabic, “and he that shall rise out of it”, the root, “shall rule over the Gentiles”. In the Hebrew text in Isaiah, this is said of the root, and to be read thus, “which shall stand for an ensign of the people”, (<sup>2811D</sup>Isaiah 11:10); because mention is made of a root, the apostle expresses the standing of it by rising out of it, which signifies both the incarnation and exaltation of Christ; and because an ensign is a token of power and government, therefore he has rendered it to “reign”, agreeably enough to the sense; since upon Christ's exaltation, and setting up his ensign or standard, the Gospel, in the Gentile world, multitudes became voluntary subjects to him, and still do; over whom he rules by his grace and Spirit, and will more largely and manifestly in the latter day, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his. In like manner R. Aben. Ezra explains the words of the Messiah.

“Says he, this may be understood, for all the whole world shall be **wtwqr tj t**, “under his power”, or government.”

And so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases them, “and kingdoms shall obey him”; so that the Jew can have no reason to complain of the apostle's version.

*In him shall the Gentiles trust*, or “hope”; this in the Hebrew text is, “to him shall the Gentiles seek”; which cannot be truly done without faith and hope; (see <sup>2810E</sup>Hebrews 11:6); for the hope and faith of enjoying what is sought for, put persons upon seeking: so that the apostle here gives us the true sense of the words, and most fully describes the affection of the Gentiles to Christ; who having some knowledge of him, seek unto him for life and salvation, prostrate themselves at his feet, venture upon him,

commit themselves to him, and hope and trust in him. This part of the prophecy is by the Jews understood of the Messiah.

“All the Gentiles (says R. David Kimchi on the text) shall seek **j yçmh l a**, “to the Messiah”, and shall go after him to do what he commands; all of them shall obey him.”

But why no mention made of the Israelites seeking to the Messiah? hear what they say, and which still confirms the sense of these words <sup>f264</sup>.

“The Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the King Messiah in future time, as it is said, “to him shall the Gentiles seek”, and not the Israelites.”

True enough! The apostle dwells on the proof of this point, it not being so easy of belief with the Jews, but makes it clear from the law, psalms, and prophets, which is the threefold division of the writings of the Old Testament; (see <sup><2344></sup>Luke 24:44).

**Ver. 13.** *Now the God of hope*, etc..] This character is taken from the latter part of (<sup><5152></sup>Romans 15:12), and is occasioned by it, “in him shall the Gentiles trust”, or “hope”; and is proper to God as he is the author and giver of this grace; for naturally men are without it; that which is a good hope is the gift of God, and through his grace, and is wrought in the heart in regeneration; for to this are the children of God begotten again. Moreover, God is the object of it; not wealth and riches, nor works of righteousness, but Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, particularly Christ, is called the believer's hope; that is, the object of it, in whom the Gentiles hope and trust. Likewise, it is God that encourages to the exercise of it by the proclamations of his grace, and mercy, and plenteous redemption; by the discoveries of his love, and views of interest in him; and by bringing to mind the past experiences of his goodness: he preserves and maintains this grace useful and lively, firm and steadfast, at least in being, which sometimes seems almost perished and gone; he increases it, and causes his people to abound in the exercise of it, and continues it even unto death. The Ethiopic version reads, “the God of our promises”, which are what hope has respect unto, and builds upon:

*fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* This is a petition to the God of hope. The apostle has recourse again to prayer, knowing that all his exhortations would be useless, without the grace of God accompanying

them: and it is observable, that he prays for the same things mentioned in the above prophecies and promises, as joy, peace, and hope; for though God has promised ever so great things concerning his people, he will be inquired of by them to do them for them. One part of this petition is, that God would “fill them with all joy”; not with every kind of joy; not with worldly joy, or with the joy of hypocrites, who rejoice in sin, or in their own boastings, which is evil; but with spiritual joy, joy in God as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, in his person, righteousness, and salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, the author of it, whose fruit it is; and in the Gospel, doctrines, blessings, and promises of it; and in the view and hope of the heavenly glory, amidst various afflictions and tribulations: and it designs an abundance of it, even a fulness thereof; though the petition implies, that as yet it is not full; it is frequently interrupted and broke in upon by the corruption of nature, and falls into sin, by the temptations of Satan, through divine desertions, and various trials and exercises; yet it supposes it may be increased, as by the renewed discoveries of the love of God, of interest in Christ, and through the gracious influences of the Spirit; and even made full and complete, though not in this, yet in the other world: another branch of the petition is, that God would fill with “peace”, with a sense of their peace with him, made by the blood of Christ; with a conscience peace in their own breasts, arising from a view of their justification by the righteousness of Christ, and from the sprinklings of his blood upon them; and also with peace one among another, which was much wanting, and the apostle was very desirous of: and all this he asks, that it might come to them “in believing”; in the way of faith, and the exercise of that grace; for joy comes this way; faith and joy go together; where one is, the other is also; and as the one increases, so does the other; a believing view of interest in Christ is attended with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: and so peace comes in at the door of faith: there is no true peace till a soul is brought to believe in Christ; and that is promoted and increased by repeated acts of faith on Christ, or by a constant living by faith on him; (see <sup>231B</sup>Isaiah 26:3). The end for which this petition is made is,

*that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.* By hope is meant that grace which God is the author, object, and promoter of; and the Syriac version reads it, **hrbsb**, “in his hope”, or “the hope of him”; of enjoying him, of meeting with him, and having communion with him in his house and ordinances; of having fresh supplies of grace from him, and of being favoured with all the blessings of grace laid up in an everlasting

covenant, and at last with eternal life and glory: to “abound” herein, is to be in the free and frequent exercise of this grace, being encouraged by the grace of God, and an enlarged experience of it, and supported by faith, the substance of things hoped for: and this “through the power of the Holy Ghost”; not by might or power of man, but by that same divine power which first began the good work, and must fulfil it; which at first implanted the grace of hope, and must perform the work of that, as of faith. The same power is requisite to cause grace to abound, or saints to abound in the exercise of it, as was to the first production of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, “that ye may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost”; but there is no copulative in the Greek text.

**Ver. 14.** *And I myself also am persuaded of you*, etc..] This is said by way of prevention to an objection that might be made to the apostle's prayers and exhortations by the Romans. What does the apostle mean by all this? what does he think of us, or take us to be? men that live in malice to one another, devoid of all humanity, and mutual respect? a parcel of fools and ignorant men, that know nothing of divine things? and though there may be some that are much to be blamed for their conduct and carriage to their fellow Christians, what, are there none among us fit to give advice and admonition? To which the apostle replies, that he was far from entertaining such thoughts of them; that though he had not seen them in person, yet he had had such an account of their faith and practice, which were famous throughout the world, that he was thoroughly persuaded of better things of them, though he thus spake; and therefore, to mollify them, and abate their resentment, he adds,

*my brethren*; testifying his affection to them, owning the spiritual relation they stood in to him, and declaring the great esteem he had for them, and the high opinion he had of them: saying,

*that ye also are full of goodness*; not naturally, for there is no good thing in men by nature, but what they had was from the Spirit of God, whose fruit is “goodness”: and by which may be meant, either the good gifts of the Spirit of God, or rather his graces, even the good work of grace in general, and which is goodness itself: it comes from a good cause, the good Spirit of God; is good in its own nature, not having the least mixture or tincture of evil in it; and good in its effects, since it makes and denominates a man a good man; now these saints might be said to be full of this, to denote the abundance, the superabundance of grace in this work: or

particularly beneficence, humanity, and sympathy to fellow Christians, may be intended. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “full of love”: but the copies and eastern versions read as we do.

*Filled with all knowledge*; not with every sort of knowledge, with the knowledge of all languages, or of all the arts and sciences, of all things, natural and political; but with all spiritual knowledge relating to God, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; to Christ and the work of redemption by him; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace; to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to their duty to God, fellow creatures, and fellow Christians; in short, with all knowledge necessary to salvation, though as yet not perfect, and which will not be in this world, but in another:

*able also to admonish one another*; as they must be, since they were both good and knowing; goodness and knowledge are necessary to admonition, and qualify persons for it: if a man is not a good man himself, he is not fit to admonish another; and if he has not knowledge, he will not be able to do it as it should be; and without humanity and tenderness, he will not perform it aright, and with success; but all this being in these persons, they were able and fit for it. Some copies read it, “able also to admonish others”; so the Syriac version renders; which makes the expression still stronger, and enlarges their praise and commendation.

**Ver. 15.** *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you,* etc..] Or freely, in taking notice of their party contentions and ill usage of each other, and in reproof, advising, and exhorting them; and which he excuses by observing, that it was,

*in some sort*, or “in part” only; meaning either that it was only in some part of the epistle he had took such a liberty, which is the sense of the Arabic version, which renders it, “in some parts of the oration”; or else that he had regard not to all of them, but to some only, to a part of the church who were most culpable; and did not design a charge against them all, and that what he said should be applied to the whole body; or rather that the boldness and freedom he had taken was but in some sort, it was but in part: this he says to mitigate it, and that it might not be thought to be so large as it might appear at first; it was but “a little more boldly”, that he wrote unto them, as the Syriac renders it; for this clause is not to be read in connection with the word “written”, as if the apostle had only wrote of the doctrines

of grace in some sort, or in part, for he declared the whole counsel of God, and never kept back anything profitable to the churches: he adds,

*as putting you in mind*; which is also said to excuse his writing, and the manner of it; he did not take upon him to be their teacher and instructor, to inform them of things they knew nothing of; only to be their monitor, to put them in mind of and refresh their memories with what they had been well instructed and established in before; (see <sup>6012</sup>2 Peter 1:12,13);

*because of the grace that is given to me of God*; meaning not the doctrine of “grace, concerning” which, as the Ethiopic version renders it, he was putting them in mind; nor the internal grace of the Spirit, by which he was inclined and assisted to write unto them; but the grace of apostleship, or that high office, which, by the grace of God, and not because of any merits of his, he was called unto: this he mentions also to excuse the freedom of his writing; since what he did was in consequence of, pursuant and agreeably to, his office as an apostle; and therefore could not have answered it to God, or them, if he had not done it; wherefore he hoped it would be took well by them.

**Ver. 16.** *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ*, etc..] The office of apostleship is here amplified and enlarged on, and the ends shown for which that grace was given to him, that he should be a minister; not in holy things about the temple, as the priests and Levites were; or a teacher of the law, some were fond of; but a minister of Christ, one that was made so by him, was qualified and sent forth to minister in his name to men; and who was a preacher of him; Jesus Christ, and him crucified, was the grand subject of his ministrations; he adds,

*to the Gentiles*; for to them, though not to the exclusion of the Jews, was he appointed a minister by Christ, and sent by him to them; among them he chiefly ministered, and was particularly and eminently useful to them; and this is another reason why the Romans ought to bear with a little boldness and freedom in writing to them, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles:

*ministering the Gospel of God*; not the service of the temple, nor the traditions of the elders, nor the law of Moses, nor the morality of the Heathens; but the Gospel, of which God is the author, whose grace is the subject, and whose glory is the end; and is good news from him to the chief of sinners; to the preaching of which the apostle was separated by him:

*that the offering up of the Gentiles*; not the offering the Gentiles offered up, their prayers, praises, or good works, though these are acceptable to God through Christ; but the Gentiles themselves, by the offering up of whom is meant their conversion; which was the end of the apostle's ministering the Gospel among them, and in which he was the happy instrument. The allusion is to the priests slaying and offering up sacrifices under the law. The apostle was a priest in a figurative and improper sense; the sacrifices he offered up were not slain beasts, but men, the Gentiles, cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit, the ministry of the Gospel; whose inside being laid open to them, and they brought to a sense of their lost condition, and need of Christ, were, through the power of divine grace attending the word, made willing to offer, or give up themselves to the Lord, to be saved by him, and him only: this the apostle, as an instrument, was concerned in; and all his view was, that it

*might be acceptable*; that is, to God, as nothing is more so to him than a broken and a contrite heart, or souls brought to a sense of themselves; and to believe in Christ, and submit to his righteousness; and then both ministers and converts are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ:

*being sanctified by the Holy Ghost*; this is said in allusion to the washing of the sacrifices under the law; and intimates, that the Gentiles, though unclean by nature and practice, yet being sanctified by the Spirit of God, whose proper work it is to sanctify, become an acceptable, being an holy sacrifice to an holy God.

**Ver. 17.** *I have therefore whereof I may glory*, etc..] Not in himself, for he that taught others not to glory in men, would not glory in himself; not in his carnal descent and fleshly privileges; nor in his knowledge of, and compliance with, the ceremonies of the law; nor in his legal, moral, and civil righteousness before God; nor in his gifts and attainments, as merited and procured by himself; nor in his labours in the ministry, and the success of it, as of himself: but

*through Jesus Christ*; or “in Jesus Christ”, as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; in what Christ was unto him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: he could boast of what he had from him, and through him, even of all spiritual blessings in him; and of a large measure of grace he had received from him; and of great and eminent gifts Christ had bestowed on him; he gloried in his cross, and boasted of a crucified Jesus, whom others despised; and whom he made the

subject of his ministry, and took delight in preaching: and freely owned that all he did was through Christ strengthening him; and that all his success in his work was owing to him, and of this he had to glory: and which was

*in those things which pertain to God*; not “with God”, as the Syriac reads it; for though in some cases it may be lawful to glory before men, yet not before God, or in his presence: nor is it anything a man may glory in, not in his own things, but in the things of God; in things relating to the Gospel of God, to the pure preaching of it, to the furtherance and spread of it, and the recommending of it to others; to the worship and ordinances of God, and a spiritual attendance on them; to the grace of God, and the magnifying of that in the business of salvation; and to the glory of God, which ought to be the chief end of all actions, natural, moral, and religious, and whether private or public. The apostle has chiefly reference to his ministerial function, and the things of God relating to that, in which he was employed; (see <sup><sup>S&H></sup> Hebrews 5:1).

**Ver. 18.** *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things*, etc..] He suggests that the false teachers did speak of things which were not done by them at all, and much less were what Christ had done by them; and signifies that he was a conscientious man, and could speak nothing but what was truth; his conscience would not suffer him, nor could he allow himself to make mention of anything, that was not done by him, as if it was; nor of anything that was done by himself, nor of anything that was done, as if it was done by himself, but as it was wrought by Christ; nor had he any need to speak of any other things which he had wrought himself, as he could not of what he had not wrought at all; or, as he says,

*which Christ hath not wrought by me*: signifying that what he had wrought, and which he could with good conscience speak of to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his grace, were not wrought by himself, but what Christ wrought by him; he was only the instrument, Christ was the efficient cause: as a Christian, it was not he that lived, but Christ lived in him; as a minister, it was not he that spoke, but Christ spoke in him; nor was it he that laboured, but the grace of Christ that was with him; much less was it he that converted souls, but Christ did it by him:

*to make the Gentiles obedient*; the nations of the world, who had been brought up in blindness and ignorance of God, in rebellion and disobedience to him. The Gospel was sent among them, and was blessed unto them, to make them, of disobedient, obedient ones; not to men, but to



God; not to magistrates and ministers, though they were taught to be so to both, but to Christ; to him as a priest, by being made willing to be saved by him, and him only, renouncing their own works, and disclaiming all other ways of salvation; and to submit to his righteousness for their justification before God, and acceptance with him; and to deal with his precious blood for pardon and cleansing; to rely on his sacrifice for the atonement of their sins, and to make use of him as the new and living way to the Father, as their one and only mediator, advocate, and intercessor; and to him as a prophet, to the faith of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; not barely by hearing it, and notionally assenting to it, but by embracing it heartily, and professing it publicly and sincerely; and to him as a King, by owning him as such, and as theirs; and by subjecting to his ordinances, and obeying his commands in faith and fear, and from love to him: the means whereby these persons were brought to the obedience of Christ, and of faith, are

*by word and deed*; or “deeds”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: by the former is meant, the word of the Gospel and the preaching of it, being sent unto them, and coming with power, and not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and by the latter, either the labour of the apostle, the pains he took, the hardships he endured, in ministering: the Gospel to them; or his agreeable life and conversation, which were a means of recommending the word, and of engaging an attention to it; or rather the miraculous works and mighty deeds which were wrought by the apostle, in confirmation of the doctrine he preached, as it seems to be explained in (~~615~~Romans 15:19).

**Ver. 19.** *Through mighty signs and wonders*, etc..] Or “in”, or “through the power of signs and wonders”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words. These carrying along with them evidence and conviction of the truth of what was delivered, wrought wonderfully and powerfully on the minds of the Gentiles to embrace the Gospel, and submit to the ordinances of it; though all would have been insufficient, had it not been for what follows,

*by the power of the Spirit of God*: the Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens's read, “by the power of the Holy Spirit”, and so does the Vulgate Latin version; meaning, either that the mighty signs and wonders in healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, etc.. were performed not by the efficacy and working of Satan, as the signs and lying wonders of antichristian men, but by the Spirit of God, by whom Christ

and all his apostles wrought the miracles they did; or that the ministration of the word in which the apostle laboured, was by the power of the Spirit of God; it was he that imparted all spiritual gifts to him, qualifying him for this service; it was he that assisted him in it, and enabled him to go through it; it was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that he performed it; and that not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: or else that the obedience of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the wonderful works that attended it as means, were purely owing to the power of the Spirit of God, as the efficient cause; it was not by might, or power of the preacher; nor merely by the power of signs and wonders; but by the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God, who took away the stony, stubborn, and disobedient heart, and gave them an heart of flesh, a tender, flexible, and obedient one; and caused them to walk in and observe the commandments and ordinances of the Lord:

*so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ*; that which Christ, as God, is the author of; as man, was a preacher and minister of; and, as Mediator, is the subject matter of: this the apostle “preached fully” and completely, every part and branch of it, kept back nothing of it, but faithfully declared the whole; and so fulfilled it, as the word may be rendered, and his ministry; or he filled the Gospel, the net of the Gospel, which he spread in every place; or rather he diffused the knowledge of it everywhere; he filled all places with it wherever he came, even “from Jerusalem” round about unto Illyricum: not that he began to preach at Jerusalem, but at Damascus; from whence he went to Arabia, and after that to Jerusalem; but inasmuch as he was of Jerusalem, and had preached there, from whence the Gospel originally came, and this was the boundary of his ministry one way, he makes mention of it; as Illyricum was the boundary of it another way, which was on the extreme part of Macedonia: it is now called Sclavonia, and is an European nation; part of it is Dalmatia, mentioned (~~SAH~~ 2 Timothy 4:10). Apollonia was in it, according to Mela<sup>f265</sup>, where the apostle is said to pass through, (~~470~~ Acts 17:1), it has on the south the gulf of Venice, on the north the Danube, on the west Germany, and on the east Thracia and Macedonia: according to Ptolomy<sup>f266</sup>, Illyris, or Illyricum, was bounded on the north with upper and lower Pannonia, now called Hungary and Austria; on the east with upper Mysia, now Servia; and on the south with part of Macedonia; it lies over against Italy, the Adriatic sea being between them;

its length, from the river Drinus to Arsa, is reckoned about 480 miles, and its breadth, from the mountains of Croatia to the sea, is computed to be about 120: it is by some divided into Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Albania; Slavonia is the western part, Albania the eastern, and Dalmatia between them; according to others, it includes Slavonia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia; and had its name of Illyricum, from Illyrius, the son of Cadmus; or as others, from Illyrius, the son of Celta: here the Gospel was preached by the Apostle Paul, and no doubt with success; and churches were planted here, and which remained for several ages: in the “second” century there was a church in Illyricum, and Eleutherius was bishop, who is said to be a famous teacher; he was born at Rome, and his mother Anthia is reported to be converted by the Apostle Paul; in the same age lived one Quirinus, first a tribune, and then a bishop of Illyricum, who became a martyr under Trajan: in the “third” century there were churches in Illyricum, though devastations were made in it by the Goths; in the “fourth” century, frequent mention is made of the churches in Illyricum; and the bishops convened at Rome under Damascus in the times of Constantius wrote with great respect to the brethren in Illyricum; in Siscia, a city in this country, Quirinus a bishop suffered martyrdom; here a synod met against the Arians, and yet many in this country were infected with that heresy, by Valens and Ursatius; in this age Hilary, of Poitiers in France, spread the Gospel in this country; and he and Eusebius of Vercelli, in Piedmont, visited the churches, and corrected what was amiss: in the “fifth” century there was a church in Illyricum, and in Salo, a city of Dalmatia, Glycerius was bishop: in the “sixth” century there were also churches here, as appears from the letter of Symmachus to the bishops of them, and to their people; and in this age also Gregory wrote to all the bishops in Illyricum, to receive such bishops as were banished: in the “eighth” century, the bishops of Illyricum were in the Nycene synod, and Boniface gathered a church in Slavonia<sup>f267</sup>; thus far Christianity may be traced in this country: hither the apostle went, not in a direct line, but round about, and took many countries, cities, and towns in his way, as the history of his journeys and travels in the Acts of the Apostles shows, and as he here suggests.

**Ver. 20.** *Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel*, etc..] The sense is, not barely that he strove to preach the Gospel and not the law, the pure Gospel, and, not a mixed one; nor only that he endeavoured to preach it fully, and leave out nothing; but that he had an holy ambition to preach it,

*not where Christ was named*; as in Judea, where he had been for many ages spoken of and expected, and where he had lately appeared, lived, suffered, and died, and where his Gospel had been preached by all the apostles; as also in such parts of the Gentile world, where others of the apostles had been, and had made mention of his name, and published the glad tidings of salvation by him; but he chose rather to go to such Heathen nations, as were wholly without any knowledge of him; who had only the dim light of nature to guide them; had had no promises nor prophecies of the Messiah, nor so much as any hints, at least very distant ones, concerning him; and where as yet the sound of the Gospel had not reached:

*lest I should build on another man's foundation*; meaning not the law of Moses, nor the doctrines of the false teachers, but the foundation of the true apostles, and which was no other than the foundation Christ, he himself laid; but he chose not to go where they had laid the foundation by preaching Christ and his Gospel, that he might not take another man's crown, or boast in another man's line, or of other men's labours; but rather to go where others had never been, that he might first lay the foundation himself, by preaching Christ, and him crucified, and so the more act up to his character as an apostle, and as the apostle to the Gentiles.

**Ver. 21.** *But as it is written*, etc..] In (<sup><2815></sup> Isaiah 52:15);

*to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand*; for the Messiah was not spoken of to the Gentiles; they were strangers to the covenants of promise; the oracles of God were committed to the Jews; God gave his word and statutes to them, and not to any other nation: and yet, according to this prophecy, the Gentiles were to see him whom they had no account of; not in the flesh with their bodily eyes, in which sense only, or at least chiefly, the Jews saw him; but with the eyes of their understanding, by faith, as exhibited and evidently set forth before them as crucified, in the Gospel and the ordinances of it: and though they had heard nothing of him, having for many hundreds of years been left in ignorance, and suffered to walk in their own ways, until the apostles were sent among them; whose sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; yet when this would be the case, according to these words, they would understand the mind and will of God, the mysteries of his grace, the nature of the person and offices of Christ, the design of his coming into the world, and the way of salvation by him; all which was greatly brought about and accomplished, in the ministry of the

Apostle Paul among them. The passage is very pertinently cited and applied by the apostle. The whole paragraph is to be understood of the Messiah, from whence it is taken, as it is owned, and accordingly interpreted by many Jewish writers, both ancient <sup>f268</sup> and modern <sup>f269</sup>; and these words particularly respect the kings and nations of the world, who are represented as struck with silence and wonder, when, upon the preaching and hearing of the Messiah, they should see him by faith, and spiritually understand what is declared concerning him. The difference between the apostle's version of these words, which is the same with the Septuagint, and the text in Isaiah, is very inconsiderable. The first clause of the Hebrew text may be literally rendered thus, "for him, who was not spoken of to them, they shall see"; and the apostle's Greek in this manner, to whom "it was not spoken of concerning him, they shall see"; the sense is the same, and person intended Christ: the latter clause, which we from the Hebrew text render, "and that which they had not heard, shall they consider"; and here, "they that have not heard, shall understand", has nothing material in it, in which they differ; for in the former part of it both design the Messiah, and the things concerning him, the Gentiles had not heard of; and the latter is rendered and explained by the Targum, and by R. Sol Jarchi, as by the apostle, **wl ktsa**, "they shall understand"; and which fitly expresses the sense of the Hebrew word used by the prophet.

**Ver. 22.** *For which cause also*, etc..] By reason of being employed for so many years, in preaching the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum; taking so large a compass to minister in, and striving to introduce, propagate, and spread the Gospel, where Christ was never named before:

*I have been much hindered from coming to you*; or he had been often, and by many ways, and upon many accounts, hindered from coming to them; the frequent calls to different and distant places, and the great work of preaching the Gospel in those dark parts of the world, and settling churches there, which was upon his hands, prevented his giving them a visit at Rome, which he much and often desired: as in the preceding verses the apostle excuses his freedom of writing to this church, so here his long delay of coming to them, assigning the reason of it.

**Ver. 23.** *But now having no more place in these parts*, etc..] Not because persecution was too hot for him, and therefore could not stay any longer, for this was what he expected everywhere; nor did it discourage him in his

work, for he took pleasure in enduring it for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; but because he had fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, in his circuit to Illyricum, had filled every town and city with it, had planted churches in every place, and ordained elders over them, to whom the care and charge of them were committed; that there were no more places for him to preach in, but either where he himself had been already, or some other of the apostles; not but that he could have stayed with usefulness to these new formed churches, for the edifying and confirming of them, for the furtherance of the joy of faith in them, and for the defence of the Gospel and its ordinances among them; but his proper work as an apostle being to preach the Gospel to all nations, and where Christ was not named, and to plant churches; and there being no more room in these climates, or regions, for such service, he begins to think of some other places, particularly Spain, where as yet very probably the Gospel was not preached: however, he found himself at leisure to visit other places, and hereby gives the church at Rome some hopes of seeing him from this consideration, as well as from what follows:

*and having a great desire these many years to come unto you*; he had not only a desire, but a very vehement desire to come to them; he longed to see them, as he elsewhere says; so that since now he had leisure, they might hope it would not be long ere they did see him; especially as the thing had been upon his mind and thoughts for many years past; which shows that the Gospel had been preached very early at Rome, that many had been converted by it, and a church had been formed there some years ago, and was known to the apostle; on which account, having heard much of their faith and obedience, he had a longing desire of a great while to see them.

**Ver. 24.** *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain*, etc..] Which he had now meditated and resolved upon, being a place, as before observed, where it is very likely the Gospel as yet had not been preached, which made him desirous of going thither; but whether he ever went thither, or not, is not certain; some think he never performed the intended journey; others affirm he did, some time between his two appearances before Nero. Sepharad, in (Obidiah 1:20), is taken by the Jewish writers for this country; and is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra on that place, called *aympsa*, “Aspamia”; a name not greatly different from Hispania, by which it usually goes among the Greeks and Latins; but Kimchi calls it *aynps*, “Spania”, the very word used in this place, and by us rendered “Spain”, as

it is usually called: it was called “Span” in the language of the Celtic, who first inhabited it, which signifies a companion; it was formerly called Iberia, from the river Iberus; afterwards Hesperia, from Hesperus, the brother of Atlas; and then Hispalia, from the city Hispalis, or Sevil; and from thence corruptly Hispania; there are some that derive it from **σπανια**, from the roughness of some places in it, barren, uncultivated, and uninhabited: it has on the east the Pyrenean mountains, by which it is divided from France, on the west the Atlantic ocean, on the north the Cantabrian, and on the south the Herculean sea, and the straits of Gades: now as the apostle intended a journey into this country; he mentions it, in order to raise their expectations of seeing him; since in his way thither, he would have a fair opportunity of coming to them; yea, he assures them, that whenever he went thither, he would come:

*I will come to you:* it was his real intention, a settled resolution and determination in his mind so to do; but whereas everything of this kind depends not upon the will of man, but upon the will and providence of God, and so many unforeseen things fall out which prevent the fulfilling of human purposes, therefore he adds,

*for I trust*, or “hope”

*to see you in my journey:* he could not be certain that he should see them, but he hoped he should, for nothing was more desirable to him; his wish was not to see their emperor, their senate, or their famous city, but them, the church of Christ there; and a beautiful and delightful sight it is, to see a church of Christ in Gospel order, walking together in the faith and fellowship, and ordinances of it, and in peace one with another:

*and to be brought on my way thitherward by you;* he not only hoped to see them, but that he should have the company of some of them along with him, in his way to Spain; from whose conversation he might expect much spiritual pleasure and refreshment; and by whom he might be directed in his way, as well as supplied with all necessaries for his journey; in which sense the phrase of bringing on in the way, is sometimes used; (see <sup><4013></sup>Titus 3:13 <sup><4006></sup>3 John 1:6); though before he should depart from them, he hoped to have abundance of satisfaction in his conversation with them together as a church:

*if first I be somewhat*, or in part,

*filled with your company*; or with you, meaning that before he should set forward from them to Spain, that he should be greatly delighted with beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith, hearing their sweet experiences, and observing their holy life and conversation, and their peace and concord among themselves; not that he expected entire satisfaction, a satiety of pleasure, fulness of joy, which are only to be had in the presence of God, and communion with angels and glorified saints; though perhaps he might expect more than he had, for at his first answer before Nero, all these Romans forsook him and fled; saints are often disappointed in their raised expectations of what they shall enjoy in each other's company.

**Ver. 25.** *But now I go unto Jerusalem*, etc..] Whither he was bound in spirit, not knowing what should befall him there, from which he could not be dissuaded by his friends, and thither he did go:

*to minister unto the saints*; not to preach the Gospel, though doubtless he did that when he was there; but to distribute among the poor saints what had been raised for them by the Greek churches; who had entreated him to take upon him this service, even the fellowship of ministering to the saints; and though this might seem below his office as an apostle, and as what more became an inferior officer, a deacon in a church; yet the apostle's heart was so much in it, and he was so bent upon it, and so diligent to execute it, that he postponed his journey to Spain and visit to Rome for the sake of it, and assigns this as a reason why he could not come at present.

**Ver. 26.** *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia*, etc..] That is, the churches of Macedonia, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica; and the churches of Achaia, especially the church at Corinth, which was the metropolis of Achaia:

*to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem*; of which contribution, of their great forwardness, readiness, and liberality, a large account is given in (~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15); from whence Origen and others have rightly concluded, that this epistle to the Romans was wrote after that; since in that the apostle exhorts and encourages them, by the example of the Macedonian churches, to finish the collection they had begun; which collection is here called a contribution, or “communion”, as the word signifies; it being one part of the communion of churches and of saints, to relieve their poor, by communicating to them, and to assist each other therein; and in which they have not only fellowship with one



another, but with Christ the head; who takes what is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself: the persons for whom the collection was made, are “the poor saints”, or “the poor of the saints”; for not all the saints, but the poor among them, were the objects of this generosity: they were saints such as are sanctified by God the Father in eternal election, and by the blood of Christ in redemption, and by the Spirit of Christ in the effectual calling, to these this goodness extended; for though good is to be done to all men, yet more especially to the household of faith: they were “poor”, which is the lot of many who are saints, whom God has chosen, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are called by grace: these came to be so, either through the great dearth which was throughout the world in the times of Claudius Caesar, when the brethren at Jerusalem particularly suffered, and were relieved by the disciples at Antioch; but this collection was made some years after that, and therefore rather they became so, through the persecutions of their countrymen; by whom they suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had a better and more enduring substance in heaven; or else through their having sold all their possessions, and thrown their money into one common stock and fund, for mutual subsistence, which was now exhausted: these poor saints lived at Jerusalem, which was at a great distance from Macedonia and Achaia; but though they were strangers, and unknown by face to them, and had only heard of them, and their distress; yet this was no objection to their cheerful contribution; they considered them as members of the same body, as belonging to the same family, and as standing in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ with themselves; and upon this foot they acted; and what they did is worthy the imitation of all the churches and people of God.

**Ver. 27.** *It hath pleased them [verily]*, etc..] This is repeated from the former verse, and is designed to point out the spring of this contribution, and the manner in which it was performed: it arose from themselves; it was the pure effect of their good will and pleasure; the first motion was from among themselves; it was their own thought, mind, and will; they were willing of themselves unto it, and begun it of themselves, unasked, and not moved unto it by any other: it was not done by constraint or necessity, but was entirely free; they did not make it for ostentation sake, or to gain the applause of men, but from a principle of love to the poor saints; and which showed itself to be sincere, hearty, and genuine, by deeds, and not bare words: they performed this service with great alacrity and cheerfulness;

they gave not sparingly, but largely; it was not a matter of covetousness, but of bounty; and they did it not grudgingly, but cheerfully; they took delight and pleasure in it; their hearts and souls were in it, and yet notwithstanding did but what they ought to do.

*And their debtors they are;* for being debtors to God for their temporal and spiritual mercies; and to Christ for what he has done for them in redemption, and for what he is to them; and to the Spirit for the influences and operations of his grace upon them, they are debtors to the saints; they are bound to love them; they owe the debt of love to them, as they are in the spiritual relation of the children of God, members of Christ, and brethren one of another; and their paying of this debt to them is, in some sense, reckoned a paying it to the divine persons. Moreover, it was not merely a debt of love which these Gentiles owed, and in this way paid to the believing Jews; but it was a debt of justice and equity; they had received what was of valuable consideration from them, and by their means: Christ himself was of the Jews; hence salvation is said to be of them, (~~4002~~ John 4:22). The writings of the Old Testament were committed to them, and faithfully preserved by them; and from them transmitted to the Gentiles; the apostles were all Jews, under whose ministry they were enlightened, converted, and brought to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; the Gospel of the grace of God came out from among them; it was first preached in Judea, and at Jerusalem; and from thence was carried and spread in the Gentile world; yea, it looks very likely, and is not at all unreasonable to suppose, that the charge of carrying and spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles was at first defrayed by the believing Jews, and out of that common stock and fund which was at Jerusalem; for it was not proper that the apostles, at their first setting out, should take anything of the Gentiles, lest they should be thought to be mercenary persons, who only sought their own worldly advantage: hence the apostle argues from the greater to the lesser,

*for if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things:* the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are spiritual things; contain and make known spiritual blessings; impart spiritual gifts; in which the Spirit of God is greatly concerned, he is the author of them; he leads men into them; qualifies them to preach them unto others; blesses and succeeds them to the conversion; comfort, and edification of souls; and by means of which he himself is received as a Spirit of illumination, sanctification, and faith: and which doctrines also relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls

and spirits of men; hereby they are enlightened, quickened, comforted, and nourished up unto eternal life: wherefore, since this is the case, and these the favours the Gentiles enjoyed through the Jews,

*their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things*; in outward and temporal things; in things pertaining to the flesh; or outward man, for the clothing and nourishment of the body. This he said to stir up the Romans, who were Gentiles also, and under the same obligations to make a contribution for them likewise.

**Ver. 28.** *When therefore I have performed this*, etc..] Meaning when he had dispatched that business, and finished that affair which the Macedonian and Achaian churches had entreated him to engage in, and which he had undertook; namely, to take their collection, and carry it to Jerusalem, and distribute it among the poor saints there; and which he expresses by another phrase,

*and have sealed to them this fruit.* The liberality of the Gentile churches is called fruit, as it may be on many accounts; as with respect to the apostle, it was the fruit of his ministry and laborious preaching of the Gospel among them; he had been sowing the seed of the word, and planting churches in these parts; and among other fruits brought forth hereby, as the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, the exercise of grace, and performance of good works, this of liberality to the poor saints was one: with respect to the persons, the objects of this bounty, it was the fruit of their spiritual things, which the Gentiles, by their means, had been partakers of; and would be as fruit, useful and profitable to them, to relieve their wants, supply them with necessaries, and make their lives more comfortable: and also with respect to the contributors, it was the fruit of the Spirit of God, and his grace in them; it was the fruit of faith, which works by love; and it was the fruit of their love to Christ, and to his saints; and was profitable to them in things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; promises of each being made and performed to such that sow liberally and bountifully. Now the ministration of this to the poor saints at Jerusalem, and on the behalf of the Grecian churches, the apostle calls a “sealing” it to them; and it is thought to be an allusion to the delivery of money sealed up, that it may not be lost, nor made use of for any other purpose than that for which it was designed: whether the apostle carried this collection sealed or not, it matters not; his sense is, that he should deliver it whole and safe unto them, and in such manner as to leave no suspicion that he had converted any part of it to his

own use; though the word here used seems to answer to the Hebrew  $\mu\tau j$ , which, with the Jews, frequently signifies to conclude, “finish”, and make an end of anything, as well as to “seal”; the sealing up of letters being the last and finishing part of them. Innumerable instances might be given; take the following one as a proof<sup>e1270</sup>:

“we find in the former prophets,  $\text{ymtwj wyh}\zeta$ , “that they sealed”, or ended their words with words of praise, or with words of consolation Says R. Eliezer, except Jeremiah,  $\mu\tau j \zeta$ , “who sealed”, or finished with words of reproof.”

So the word is used in (~~202b~~ Daniel 9:24), and then the apostle's plain meaning is, when I have made an end of this affair, have finished this business of ministering and distributing to the poor saints at Jerusalem,

*I will come by you into Spain.* The Ethiopic version reads it, “Lasitania”, designing, no doubt, Lusitania, which was formerly a part of Spain, now called Portugal. Whether the apostle ever was there is not certain nor very probable, since when he came to Jerusalem he was apprehended, and after sometime sent a prisoner to Rome, where he suffered; however, it was his intention to go to Spain, and to take Rome in his way thither.

**Ver. 29.** *And I am sure when I come to you,* etc..] He intended to go to Spain; he was not sure he should reach thither; but he was positive in it he should come to Rome. It had been much and long upon his mind; and under an impress of the Spirit of God upon him, he had signified some time before this, that after he had been at Jerusalem, he “must see, Rome also”, (~~4432i~~ Acts 19:21), and it was afterwards more expressly told him by the Lord, that as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, he should bear witness at Rome also, (~~4423i~~ Acts 23:11), and therefore he was fully assured he should come to Rome, and was as confident of the manner of his coming thither.

*I shall come in,* or “with”

*the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ;* with the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Christ; and which must make him a welcome person to every sensible soul wherever he came; to this he was chosen, separated, and called; for this he was abundantly qualified; this was committed to his trust, and which he carried with him wherever he went: and he was not ashamed of it, and was ready to preach it even at Rome also. With “the Gospel of Christ”; not his own, or another's, or any man's,

but Christ's, which he had by the revelation of Christ; of which Christ is the sum and substance, and which Christ himself preached; “with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ”. Some by “blessing” understand a liberal contribution, which he trusted he should make at Rome, for the poor saints at Jerusalem; believing that their hearts would be opened, under the preaching of the Gospel, to give freely to them, and that this would be a blessing that would attend it: but rather he means, either the blessed gifts he had, qualifying him for preaching the Gospel, with which he should come and deliver it among them, and which would attend it with success; such as boldness of spirit, freedom of speech, enlarged knowledge, mighty signs and wonders, and the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: or the blessed effects it would have on them, in establishing them in the present truths; in further enlightening and instructing their minds; in edifying, quickening, and comforting them; and in nourishing up with the words of faith and sound doctrine, unto eternal life: or the blessings of grace exhibited and set forth in the Gospel; such as justification and forgiveness of sins, peace and reconciliation, salvation and eternal life. Nay, he believed he should come in, or with the “fulness” of all this; meaning, either that he believed he should find them full of the Gospel, and the fruits of it; or rather that he should come full fraught with it, and fully preach it to them, and keep back thing that would be profitable. There is a fulness in the Gospel; it is full of the deep things of God, which the Spirit searches and reveals, (<sup><4220></sup>1 Corinthians 2:10); it is full of the doctrines of grace and truth, which Christ himself is said to be full of, (<sup><4014></sup>John 1:14): it is full of exceeding great and precious promises transcribed from Christ, and out of the covenant of grace; and it is full of a variety of food, of milk for babes, (<sup><3653></sup>Hebrews 5:13), and meat for strong persons, (<sup><3654></sup>Hebrews 5:14). The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read only, “with the fulness of the blessing of Christ”; and so the Ethiopic version.

**Ver. 30.** *Now I beseech you, brethren,* etc..] Having declared his intention of coming to them, and his confidence of it, he entreats an interest in their prayers; and which he urges from the consideration of their mutual relation as “brethren”; and therefore should love one another, and show it, among other things, by praying for each other to their common parent, in whom they have a joint interest, saying, as directed by Christ, “our Father which art in heaven”, (<sup><4155></sup>Matthew 5:45); thereby signifying, that they prayed not for themselves only, but for all the brethren, all the children of God: and this the apostle further urges,

*for Christ's sake*; whose servant he was, and in whose cause he was engaged, whose Gospel he preached, and whose glory he sought; and therefore, if they had any regard for Christ, and the good of his interest, he beseeches them that they would pray for the continuance of his life and usefulness; since for him to live was for the good of the churches of Christ, though for him to die would be his own personal gain: and which he also stirs them up to,

*for the love of the Spirit*; meaning either the love of the Father, and of the Son, which was shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which he had directed them into, and they had a comfortable sensation of; or that love to God, to Christ, and one another, which the Spirit of God had wrought in them in regeneration; or that love with which the Spirit of God equally loved them, as the Father, and the Son; and which he had shown in their conversion and sanctification, in applying all grace unto them, and indwelling in them as the Spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly inheritance.

*That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* The apostle prayed for himself, as he had been wont to do ever since he was a converted man; but knowing well the force of united social prayer, he desires the assistance of others. He represents prayer as an agony, an holy conflict, and striving with God, a wrestling with him, as Jacob did, who held him, and would not let him go without the blessing, and had power with him, and prevailed. The phrase denotes the fervency of prayer, the strength, labour, and energy of it; (see <sup>5042</sup>Colossians 4:12); and also intimates, that the apostle foresaw he should have a combat with many enemies where he was going, and should be in great danger by them; and therefore desires they would join him in the use of their spiritual armour, and in that particular part of it, prayer, which has been often used to good purpose against the enemies of the Gospel: he does not desire these Romans to beg the assistance of their senate or emperor: but to pray to God for him, and join with him in their prayers to him, who is a God hearing prayer, and able to save. The petitions he would have them put up to him, are as follow:

**Ver. 31.** *That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea,* etc..] By whom some think are meant such, who, though they believed in Jesus as the Messiah, yet were violently set against the apostle for preaching down the ceremonial law; and from whom he foresaw he should

be in much danger when he came to Jerusalem, and therefore desires the church at Rome to pray for his deliverance from them; though rather such who did not believe in Jesus Christ at all are designed; and who were enemies to the Gospel, and to all Gospel ministers, but especially to the Apostle Paul, for preaching among the Gentiles, and such doctrines as he did, which struck at their peculiar notions; and, as he feared, he should be set upon by them, and his life be in great danger, so it was; (see <sup>4017</sup>Acts 21:27-31); though he was not disheartened and intimidated, and did not shun going up to Jerusalem, though entreated not to go; yet he thought proper to engage the churches of Christ in prayer for him, that he might be delivered out of the hands of such wicked and unreasonable men, who being destitute of faith in Christ, were filled with enmity against his ministers; (see <sup>5001</sup>2 Thessalonians 3:1,2);

*and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints*; that is, that the collection which was made by the Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the ministration of which unto them he had took upon him, might be cheerfully and gratefully received by them. One would think there were no fear of this, nor any need to pray for it; for if they were poor, and in necessitous circumstances, as they were, they would be glad of relief, and thankfully accept it: but the case was this, and the difficulties attending this service were, that this collection came from the Gentiles, to whom the Jews had an aversion, and was brought to them by one that they had entertained an ill opinion of, being informed that he had taught the Gentiles to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, or walk after the customs; wherefore he did not know whether, though in necessity, anything coming for their relief from such a quarter, and through his hands, would be received with any pleasure by them: besides, his desire was that it might be received as a token of the true and sincere love the Gentiles bore to them; and be a means of reconciling the believing Jews to them, to own them as sister churches of the same faith and order with themselves.

**Ver. 32.** *That I may come unto you with joy*, etc..] The end the apostle had, in desiring them to request the above things at the throne of grace for him, was, that he might come to them, which unless he was delivered from the unbelieving Jews, could not be; and therefore since they had an interest in this matter, he might hope they would be the more importunate in their supplications for him, the he might escape their hands; and seeing also, should the saints there use him in an ungrateful manner, and slight the

kindness of the Gentile churches, and his service should not have the desired effect, his coming to them would be with sorrow: wherefore he puts them upon praying for success in this affair, that so when he came among them he should have no uneasiness upon his mind, or, anything of this kind to distress him, and interrupt that pleasure and delight he promised himself in their company and conversation: he adds,

*by the will of God:* resigning himself, and submitting all things to the sovereign will of God, and the wise disposals of his providence: he knew his deliverance from his enemies must be by, and the success of his services owing to, and his coming to Rome entirely according to, the will of God, and as he should think fit and proper; so he acted himself, and so he taught these believers to have their regard to, and sit down contented with the will of God in all things; to which he subjoins,

*and may with you be refreshed;* with the presence of God among them, with the Gospel in the fulness and blessing of it with which he should come and with the mutual faith and comfortable experience of him and them, which they should communicate to each other; than all which nothing is more reviving, and refreshing to the spirits of God's people.

**Ver. 33.** *Now the God of peace be with you all, Amen.*] As God is in this chapter before styled the God of patience, (<sup>(451B)</sup>Romans 15:5), and the God of hope, (<sup>(451B)</sup>Romans 15:13), because of his concern in these graces; so he is here styled “the God of peace”, because of his concern in that peace which is made between him and his people, by the blood of Christ. This peace was first upon his thoughts, which are therefore called thoughts of peace; a council of peace was held between him and his Son upon this head; the scheme of reconciliation was drawn by him in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, which takes its name from this momentous article of it; he appointed Christ to be the peacemaker, and laid on him the chastisement of our peace; and it pleased him by him to reconcile all things to himself, (<sup>(501D)</sup>Colossians 1:20). Moreover, he is so called because he is the giver of all true solid conscience peace, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding of natural men; and which when he gives, none can give trouble; and is what he fills his people with in a way of believing, leading their faith to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his Son. He is also the author of happiness and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and likewise of all the peace and concord which is in his churches, and among his saints; so that when the apostle wishes that the God of



peace might be with them, he not only prays that the presence of God might be with them; but that they might have fresh views of their interest in peace, made by the blood of Christ; that they might enjoy peace in their own consciences, arising from thence; that they might be possessed of felicity of every kind, and that unity and harmony might subsist among them; that the peace of God might rule in their hearts, and they live in love and peace one with another, laying aside all their differences as Jews and Gentiles, about the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses; to which the apostle may have a particular respect in this concluding wish of his, and here indeed properly the epistle ends; the following chapter being as a sort of postscript, filled up with salutations and recommendations of particular persons; wherefore the word “Amen” is placed here, though it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy.