

**A TRANSCRIPT**  
**OF DR. S. BECKER'S**  
**LECTURES ON ROMANS**

***BY GERHOLD LEMKE***

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## FOREWORD

This volume is an edited transcript of lectures on the Book of Romans given to lay audiences by Dr. Siegbert W. Becker. Two sources were used: a printed copy of lectures given at Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College during the 1965/66 school year (covering the introduction, followed by chapters 1, 2, 3, 9); and tapes of the entire lecture series from late in the 1970s.

At the end of the 1965 transcript is this note from Dr. Becker: "I have not read these notes nor edited them. They may well contain some things which are the result of inattention and carelessness on the part of the lecturer. They should not be quoted with the same freedom which might be used if they had been read and edited by the lecturer."

As a 1970 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, I did not have Dr. Becker for any classes, but I have appreciated the experience of editing this volume. Though it necessarily condenses the original by about a third, I have tried to preserve Dr. Becker's manner of speaking. Scripture citations and references have been identified to help readers with Bible study. Quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible that Dr. Becker used at the time. I have left out the names of some of the men mentioned by Dr. Becker in his lectures.

I placed the introductory lecture on the origin and authorship of the Book of Romans at the end of this volume; it quotes extensively from chapter 16 of Romans. Chapters 15 and 16 were not covered in the transcripts available. (The family of Dr. Becker would appreciate receiving tapes of any of his lectures which they may not already have.) In this volume, "Old Testament" and "New Testament" have been abbreviated "O.T." and "N.T." Many chapter and verse references from Romans are given without "Romans" being printed every time.

Moses said, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations" (Deuteronomy 32:7). This work is more than a commentary on Romans. The stories recorded herein open a window to the past, helping us appreciate what many of us never experienced for ourselves. When we know how people practiced their Christian faith in the past, we have a point of reference to guide us as we look to the future.

Paul wrote to Timothy warning of a departure from true Christian faith. Then he said, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Timothy 4:6). I anticipate that in years to come many more people will benefit from what Dr. Becker taught. With David we can say, "I have a goodly heritage" (Psalm 16:6). A good inheritance is good to have and something to share with others.

My working copy of this volume has been placed with the library of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI, should anyone wish to see the original. I would like to thank Prof. David Kuske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for giving my work a final editing before its printing by the Seminary Book Store.

SIEGBERT W. BECKER      1914 - 1984

Professor Siegbert W. Becker was born October 28, 1914 near St. Paul, Minnesota. He died September 1, 1984 in Mequon, Wisconsin. A 1938 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, he became a member of the Wisconsin Synod in 1963. In the February 7, 1965 Northwestern Lutheran, Dr. Becker wrote: "I joined the Wisconsin Synod because it was important to me to be a member of a church in which my own faith was not assailed constantly by men who outwardly passed as brethren but who, by denying the inerrancy of Scripture and other fundamental doctrines of the church, were tearing down the foundations on which all Christian faith must rest, namely, the words and promises of God."

Dr. Becker taught at Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College from 1963 until 1969 when he joined the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He retired in June 1984. More information about Dr. Becker may be found in Christian News, vol. 22, numbers 33, 40 and 48. In the December 1984 issue of the Northwestern Lutheran, Rev. James P. Schaefer writes: "His ministry was that of the scholar and teacher of teachers and pastors. Yet, he was a popular lecturer at lay forums. His Bible classes were models of what a Bible class ought to be. His association with the Lutheran Confessional Church of Sweden brought him before many circuits of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society to speak about this fledgling church."

Schaefer continues: "His outstanding quality to my mind was his rugged, strong, unyielding faith. ...He always lived his life - all of it - in the presence of God."

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THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS

ROMANS 1

Verses 1 through 7 are the introductory greeting of this letter. In ancient times letters were not written in the same form as we use today. Now we put our letters in envelopes which are addressed to the individual to whom the letter is written. The address of the sender may be in the upper left-hand corner. When you open the letter you have the date and place of writing, the name and address of the person written to, the body, conclusion and signature - which is a very stupid way of writing a letter. When you open a letter the very first thing that you want to know is who wrote it. If the name is not in the upper right-hand corner, and the letter is several pages long, I'm sure that there isn't a single one of you who starts reading at the beginning. First you will page to the end and look at the signature. Then when you know whom the letter is from you start reading it.

The ancients were a little more sensible. The very first word in the ancient letter was the name of the writer. Then came the name of the person addressed. Then came the greeting. That's what you have here. Romans 1:1-7 is one sentence. If you reduce it to its bare skeleton you have: "Paul - to all that be in Rome - grace and peace." That's your sentence. Everything else that you have in the first seven verses modifies those phrases in some way.

"Grace ... and peace" (1:7) is the greeting. "Shalom," peace, is the Jewish greeting today. Wasn't it last year that the popular song about shalom came out? They say hello with shalom and good-by with shalom. That's the Hebrew word for peace. When Paul says, "Paul, to all that be in Rome, peace," he is addressing them the way a Jew would greet other Jews.

But Paul is also writing to Greeks. We have seminary students here; but I'm not going to mention the Greek language very often. If I do, you have permission to look disgusted, because we're going to deal with this on the basis of the English text. But this is one place where I would like to say a little bit about it. The ordinary Greek greeting is cheirein or cheirete. The Greek word for "grace" is charis. So Paul's charis is a pun on cheirein. It sounds pretty much like it, but it has a very definite Christian connotation. Cheirein means to rejoice, to be happy; charis means grace, the grace of God which brings us joy and happiness. There is a very definite connection between those two ideas, not only in the sound, but also in the ideas that are expressed. Because we have the grace of God we can also rejoice.

I want to spend a little more time on the first verses to give you some idea of the method we follow when we interpret the Bible.

"Paul" you all know. We could spend an hour or so talking about the life of St. Paul. I won't say anything more about him. But this is what you would do in an intensive study of a book. Taking the word Paul, you would, at least in a summary fashion, treat of the life of this man and his place in the Church. (See end notes in this volume for some information about Paul and his mission journeys.)

Paul describes himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ" (1:1). The word "servant" in the original really means a slave. "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ," a bond servant, one who has to be tied up at night so that he won't run away. This servant is someone who is under the complete control of his master, someone who has no will of his own, no right to go where he pleases or to do what he pleases. Slaves were the lowest class in Roman society. Yet, when Paul identifies himself to his fellow Christians, the first thing that he says about himself is that he is a slave. Paul was proud of the fact that he was a free man, a citizen of the Roman Empire. At one time he said, "I am ... a Jew of Tarsus ... no mean city" (Acts 21:39). Tarsus was an important city. And "I was free born" (Acts 22:28). But here, when he addresses fellow Christians, Paul identifies himself first of all as a slave of Jesus Christ.

Paul is a wonderful example for Christians, and especially for pastors and teachers in the Church. This is what I should want to be first of all, "a slave of Jesus Christ." Slavery is usually looked upon as being beneath the dignity of a human being. This, of course, is true in a certain sense. Slavery degrades a human being if he is a slave of man. But to be a slave of Jesus Christ is an honor; everyone who holds that position should be proud. In all our teaching and preaching, in all our work in the Church, we ought to be bound by Jesus Christ. We don't go where we want to go or do what we want to do, acting according to the dictates of our sinful flesh. We are slaves of Jesus, wanting to do only what he wants done.

There is something else that can be said about this phrase, "servant of Jesus Christ." This becomes almost a technical term for the O.T. prophets. "Moses my servant" (Joshua 1:2). So when Paul calls himself "a servant of Jesus Christ," he is placing himself on a level with the O.T. servants of God.

"Called to be an apostle" (1:1). "Apostle" comes from the Greek word meaning "to send out." An apostle is one who is sent. That name is echoed in a lot of the famous passages of Scripture. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Or the words of Jesus to his apostles on Easter Sunday evening: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). The prophets were men sent by God. False prophets are described as those who speak although they have not been sent (Jeremiah 23:31,32). By calling himself an apostle, Paul is making this claim, that he has been sent by God, that he is the Lord's messenger.

The word "messenger" comes from the Latin word "to send." A messenger is one who is sent with a message that he has been given to relay to others. The Latin word for messenger gives us the English word "missionary," which also means sent out. But the difference between an apostle and a missionary is that an apostle is sent out directly by God, and a missionary is sent out by God through the Church. When Paul was called by the Lord on the road to Damascus, he was called so that Jesus might send him as "a chosen vessel" to bear his name to all people (Acts 9:15). "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). Paul often speaks of the fact that he has been sent by the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel.

At the very beginning of this letter, Paul pulls rank on his hearers, you might say, by calling himself an apostle. There are a lot of people nowadays who insist that it is very unpopular to go out and preach in an authoritarian way. The new way of teaching religion is to present the facts to people and let them make up their own minds. This irritates me no end because this is not the way to teach religion. The teaching of religion ought to be a confession of faith. This doesn't mean that you present something objectively - as though this is a possibility, and that is a possibility, and now you can choose. What you are to do as a teacher of religion is to tell people the truth, and tell them that it is the truth. This is the spirit in which I learned religion from my teachers at the seminary.

This is one of the things that bothered me the most about what was happening in the Missouri Synod, that there was no more authoritarian teaching. The right position was presented, but simply as one of a number of options that you have. They said, "This is the way to teach in a democratic society. You must never teach in an authoritarian way." But the prophets of the O.T. didn't say, "Look, folks, we've got something to tell you; see what you think of it."

I remember talking to one of the prominent pastors of the Missouri Synod in 1947. I said, "Don't you preach the truth from the pulpit?" He said, "No, I don't really know what the truth is; but I present these things for my congregation's consideration." And that's how we were supposed to present things in class too! You could teach anything you wanted to as long as you didn't say that this was the right thing - because that's authoritarian, contrary to the spirit of modern man. It's not only contrary to the spirit of modern man - it's contrary to the spirit of man all the way back to the Garden of Eden! This is man's rebellion; it has nothing to

do with being modern. St. Paul doesn't teach that way; neither did the O.T. prophets. They didn't say, "Now look, we've got something to say; see what you think of it." The first thing that they said, usually, when they got up to teach was, "Thus saith the Lord! You'd better not contradict it." This is authoritarian teaching. That's the way Paul starts here, too, when he says, "I'm a servant of Jesus Christ, but I'm also called to be an apostle. I am an apostle of Jesus Christ. You had just better listen to what I have to say, because what I have to say is the truth. It's a message from God, not something for you to accept or reject on the basis of your own personal likes or dislikes. This is the Lord's message, and you deny it at the risk of your own salvation." Paul didn't appoint himself to be an apostle. He was called by God. That wasn't just some vague feeling, either, that the Lord wanted him to be an apostle. Paul could point to a day when the Lord Jesus appeared to him and told him that he wanted him to be an apostle (Acts 9:15). Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). This was a definite historical event. To this day, when men are called, this is not a vague spiritual experience that they have, but a definite event in their lives. A congregation, or a group of Christians, ask them to serve.

"Separated unto the gospel of God" (1:1). The idea here is that Paul is one of the whole mass of mankind. All the human beings in the world are included in that circle. Paul says, "I was separated; a line was drawn around me. I was separated from the rest of mankind, set apart for the gospel."

"(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)" (1:2). Now, what's the antecedent of "he"? What is the word for which this pronoun stands in the context? God. "The gospel of God, which God had promised." I've never seen this particular passage quoted as a proof text for verbal inspiration, but it could be. "God promised this gospel before in the holy scriptures." This definitely implies that the promises that are in the Holy Scriptures are the words and promises of God. God is spoken of here as the author of Scripture, of the Bible.

The antecedent of "which" is the gospel. If you substitute the nouns for the pronouns, you could restate the thoughts of 1:2 in this way: "God had promised the gospel in times gone by, by his prophets in the holy scripture." The prophets are the agents of God used to make these promises, but the promises are the promises of God. The promises written in the books of Isaiah or Jeremiah are not really their promises, but God's promises. The prophets are only the mouthpieces through whom God spoke (Hebrews 1:1). This is the force of that phrase, "by his prophets" (1:2).

Paul did not see any difference between his teaching and the teaching in the O.T. Paul says, "This gospel of God which I have been called upon to preach is the same gospel which God promised before in the holy scriptures by the prophets." So often it is said that there is a difference between the O.T. religion and the N.T. religion. In modern biblical studies it is just taken for granted by most scholars that there is an evolutionary development in religion, so that the O.T. represents an earlier stage of religion. In the N.T. there is supposed to be a far higher stage in the history of religion. This is not the way St. Paul looked at it. As far as he was concerned, the gospel which he preached was the gospel which had been proclaimed already in the O.T.

We need to look at that phrase, "Which he had promised afore..." (1:2). Now, if I in a letter promise to send my son some money, the money isn't in that letter. If I promise my son a bicycle for Christmas, he doesn't have that bicycle now. This creates a difficulty here because God in the O.T. Scriptures "promised" the gospel. Does that mean that God in the O.T. promised that some time in the future he would send the gospel to the world? The answer has to be no, because the O.T. doesn't promise that the gospel will be preached. The O.T. preaches the gospel already. When God in the O.T. Scriptures, the Scriptures of the prophets, promised the gospel, this can't possibly mean that God promised that the gospel would be preached sometime in the future. Grammatically the phrase could be understood that way. But when you are faced with a phrase which can be understood in several ways you have to look at the



context. You have to decide what this phrase means on the basis of everything that surrounds it. Grammatically this verse could mean that in the O.T. God promised that sometime in the future he would send the gospel to the world. But this can't be right because you have the gospel stated clearly already in Genesis 3:15, Isaiah, etc. The O.T. tells us that God forgives sins - which is a proclamation of the gospel.

In the O.T. the gospel was a promise. In the O.T. the gospel was proclaimed in the form of a promise. In the O.T. God said that he would send his Son to die for the sins of the world. In the N.T. God tells us that he did send his Son to pay for the sins of the world. So in the O.T. you have the central gospel message as a promise; and in that sense God in the O.T. "promised" the gospel promise. In the O.T. "the gospel was proclaimed in the form of promises" - that's how I would translate it here, if I were translating according to sense. In grammar we call this a cognate object. The gospel is a promise; so God promised this promise, that he would send his Son, Jesus Christ.

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (1:3,4). Here you have a set of phrases which you will understand better if you set them out in parallel lines because they are manifestly parallel thoughts.

When I got out of the seminary, I had a lot of time in a little congregation in northwest Iowa. I made up my mind that I was going to sit down and make a translation of Romans in modern speech. Right here, with this phrase, "according to the spirit of holiness," I got stuck. The only thought that entered my mind was that this meant the Holy Spirit. Because of that misunderstanding I never knew exactly what Paul had said, and I didn't know how to express this phrase in simple English that a layman could understand. So that's where I stopped translating Romans. And it wasn't until one day when I wrote out these phrases as parallel thoughts that I began to understand what "according to the spirit" really means here. The phrase refers to Jesus' spiritual mode of existence. And "which was made according to the seed of David" refers to his fleshly mode of existence (cf. Wis. Luth. Quarterly, Vol. 76, No. 3, p. 249).

There are some people who want to make this phrase "with power" modify "declared." Jesus was "powerfully declared," decisively declared to be the Son of God. Luther translates it this way. "Und kraeftiglich erweist ein Sohn Gottes..." (1:4). Here the King James is correct. Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead." He doesn't become the Son of God in the resurrection, but he is "declared to be the Son of God with power." Up to the time of his resurrection he was the Son of God, but the Son of God in "the form of a servant." He "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7). So when he was born in Bethlehem, when he lived at Nazareth, when he walked the roads of Palestine there wasn't much power manifested. You see it occasionally in the miracles; but for thirty years Jesus didn't do a single miracle. He didn't show himself "to be the Son of God with power." But after his resurrection from the dead, then he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Then he took over the full and constant use of all the divine attributes communicated to his human nature, as we say in the catechism.

Jesus "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God ... according to the spirit" (1:3,4). These two phrases are often used together in connection with Christ. "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit" (1 Timothy 3:16). The King James capitalized the "s" here, but this is something you can't begin to demonstrate on the basis of the original. The original Greek used all capital letters. Jesus was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18). The King James says "by the Spirit," but it should be "in the spirit." That passage helps you more than any other to understand what is meant here. This would be a long study if we could just spend a whole hour on this phrase.

The Bible uses the word "flesh" in different ways. "Flesh" is sometimes used to denote only the meat on your bones, the flesh of animals. As Jesus said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Sometimes the word stands for a human being. "No flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29). The word "body" can stand for a human being. "If a body meet a body coming through the rye..." Understood literally, that would be gruesome. "Soul" is used that way too. "Let every soul (person) be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). That isn't a mixture of church and state; the government has no power over your soul. The same is true of this verse, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 19:4), a verse quoted by some people to prove that the soul is not immortal. The person who sins shall die. Sometimes "flesh" stands for everything bad in man. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

The Bible uses "flesh" in connection with Christ in another passage. Christ, "in the days of his flesh," wept tears (Hebrews 5:7). Somebody might say, "That's during the days when he had flesh." That can't mean that because we know that he has flesh even now. "The days of his flesh" are not the days when he had a true human body. It can't mean that because "the days of his flesh" in which he wept are over now. "The days of his flesh" are evidently those days when he was here on earth and when he had to suffer. That he has flesh even today after his resurrection is clear from the words that he spoke to his disciples, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Jesus "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). Since today Christ has a body, "the days of his flesh" would be what we call his state of humiliation. He "was made of the seed of David" (1:3) in accord with his state of humiliation.

Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power" according to his state of exaltation. When Christ rose from the dead his body was no longer a "fleshly" body but a "spiritual" body. This helps you understand what Paul says about the resurrection. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). When Jesus was put to death "in the flesh" this was part of his humiliation. When he was raised "according to the spirit" (1:4) this was in his exaltation.

A lot of Lutheran commentators understand this in a different way, as a reference to Jesus' human nature and divine nature. So, according to his human nature, he is "made of the seed of David" (1:3). According to his divine nature he is "declared to be the Son of God" (1:4). But then why this "with power"? I would be real happy with the interpretation of human nature and divine nature if it weren't for this phrase, and if it weren't for all the other passages that speak of Christ being God manifested in the flesh and justified in the spirit (1 Timothy 3:16). That evidently refers to Jesus' resurrection, when he was "raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). But our justification is really his, when he declared us free of all blame. That was our justification, because the sins for which he was delivered were our sins. But it becomes rather complicated. If you would sit down with your concordance and look up all the passages that use the words "flesh" and "spirit" in connection with Christ, I think you would eventually come to the conclusion that this is more specific than human nature and divine nature. This refers to Jesus' humiliation and exaltation. "By the resurrection from the dead" (1:4) also leads me to understand this as Jesus' state of exaltation. It is by the resurrection that he enters into this new state in which he shows himself and is declared by God to be "the Son of God with power."

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name" (1:5). "Grace and apostleship" may be two different ideas. With the word "grace" Paul may be referring to the forgiveness of sins and salvation that came to him by God's grace. But it is also possible to understand grace here as being another word for apostleship. So, "By whom we have received this gracious gift that we have been made one of God's apostles" would be another way of understanding what Paul is saying here. Either way would make good sense.

"For obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name" (1:5). Let's start with the last phrase, "for his name." It's more difficult. It doesn't mean much to us right away. What does the Bible mean when it talks about the name of God? When I was in parochial school I memorized the passage, "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 48:10), but it never made much sense to me. And I always had a great deal of difficulty memorizing the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. It never seemed to make sense to me that you jump from "Hallowed be thy name" to Luther's explanation: "The name of God is ... holy among us ... when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity..." How could that be? I thought that God's name meant the names God, Jesus, Christ, Redeemer, Savior. But what the Bible means by God's "name" becomes more clear if you think of what we say when we talk about ruining somebody's good name. When Joe Smith gets a bad name that doesn't mean that now people are calling him Rabinowitz. Getting a bad name means getting a bad reputation. And having a good name means having a good reputation. A person's name is what other people know or think they know about him. So God's name will be what people know about God.

What do people know about God? They know what God has told them about himself in the Holy Scriptures. And when will God's name be and remain holy? When the Holy Scriptures remain unchanged. God's name is hallowed when what people know about God is exactly what God wants them to know - when God's Word "is taught in its truth and purity." See how well Luther understood this. Start with the idea of a "good name," and you will be able to make this just as clear to children as it was to Luther. So when the Bible says "According to thy name ... so is thy praise" (Psalm 48:10), that isn't a hard passage either. It means: "The more people know about you the more they will praise you." And when Paul says that he was sent to the Gentiles for God's name (Acts 9:15; 22:21), he means that he was made an apostle so that the Gentiles might know about God.

And now, why was Paul made an apostle among the Gentiles for the name of God? "For the obedience of faith." It's translated "for obedience to the faith" (1:5) in the King James, but you will notice that you have a variant translation in the margin. It says, "to the obedience of faith." Paul was made an apostle to make known the revelation of God for, or to, the obedience of faith. That phrase could be understood in several different ways. It could be the obedience that flows out of faith - like "lady of Spain" means the lady who comes from Spain. However, here again the context of Scripture helps you because Paul regularly uses the word "obey" as a synonym for faith. To "obey the gospel" (Romans 10:16) in Paul's language means to believe the gospel, to accept the gospel. It's not obedience in the sense that you keep the commandments, but in the sense of accepting the gospel for your salvation.

This "obedience of faith" (1:5) is what we call an explanatory genitive. The English word "of" can stand for so many things. "The house of the man" is a genitive of possession. "The lady of Spain" is an explanatory genitive. "A gift of money" is adjectival, a money gift. If you say, "There is no love of God in that man's heart," you mean that he has no love for God. The love of God for us is shown by the sending of his Son. So "the love of God" can be my love for him or his love for me. This is going to become very important when we get to "the righteousness of God" (Romans 3:5,21,22). Is that the righteousness which God has, or the righteousness which comes from God, or the righteousness which is God (Jeremiah 23:6)? You can rule out this third possibility right away. Is it the righteousness which I have for God, or the righteousness God gives me - as "the love of God" may be the love he shows by sending his Son? If I love God, if God is the object of my love, we call this an objective genitive. Objective genitives are found only when the noun is the name of the action. "Love" can be a noun or a verb. If "the love of God" is the loving that God does, then God is the subject of the love, and this is a subjective genitive. If this is the love that God receives from us, then God is the object of our love, and this is an objective genitive. Please remember this when we discuss "the righteousness of God" (1:17), a very important phrase for the understanding of Romans.

"For obedience to the faith" (1:5). You won't run into any doctrinal difficulty if you go with this translation, or if you translate "the obedience of faith." But my personal interpretation is that Paul has been sent by God as an apostle to make known the name of God among the Gentiles in order that they might become obedient to the gospel, that is, that they might have faith, the obedience which is faith. It can also mean that they might have that obedience to God's will which flows out of faith.

"Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ" (1:6). These Roman Christians are among the nations (1:5) who are to know the name of God, and who are to come to the obedience of faith through the preaching of the gospel.

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (1:7). You notice that the words "to be" are in italics. Do you all know what italics mean in the King James Bible? These words aren't in the original Greek, but were added for the sake of the English idiom. Literally it is "called saints." Augustine (354-430) said that they are not called by God because they are saints, but they are saints because they are called by God - which I think manifests a very fine understanding of that phrase. The English makes the thought more clear. "Called saints" is not as clear as "called to be saints." They were called by God in order that they might be saints.

This finishes the first section. We won't be able to do this with all the words of Romans; we could never get through more than a few chapters by next January. But I wanted to do this with the first verses so that you can see how it is possible to study each individual word; and we haven't done everything that could be done.

(Q.) Is "saints" another name for Christians? (A.) A saint is a holy person. The word saint has been Anglicized; it's from the Latin word sanctus. When "-nct-" comes out of Latin into English through the Norman French it always changes to the combination "-int." You know some English words with "-int." The Latin punctus gives us point. From junctus, where two roads join (junction), we get joint. Junction keeps the "-nct-" because it comes directly from the Latin. Sanctus becomes saint; but "sanctify" keeps the "-nct-."

A saint is one who has been sanctified by God, made holy by God; and the Bible tells us how men become holy. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25,26). A saint is one who has been made holy by the blood of Christ, a believer who has received the forgiveness of sins by faith. If he is forgiven, without sin, he is now a holy person, a saint. This makes it clear that the definition of saint as used by the Roman Catholic Church just isn't biblical. This church usually thinks of a saint as one who is in the presence of God enjoying the "beatific vision" (TLH 605:3), having been released from the pains of purgatory. For the Roman Catholics "the holy Christian Church" and "the communion of saints" are two different entities. According to St. Paul these people in Rome were saints (1:7; 16:2,15); and they hadn't died yet. (Further comments under Romans 3:27-28).

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (1:8). There isn't much that needs explaining here. Again, Paul is a wonderful example for Christian teachers. Carrying out the office of the ministry for these people as their teacher, Paul was praying for them. Does it strike you as a little strange that Paul should say, "I thank my God ... that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world"? These Christians were evidently exemplary figures so far as the Christian faith was concerned. People all over the world were saying what fine Christians they were. Whom would we thank for this? The Christians in Rome? No; Paul thanks God for this.

When a Christian congregation demonstrates some particular virtue, in these days when our synod is having difficulty meeting all its obligations because there are so many mission responsibilities and unlimited opportunities, we sometimes point to fine examples of stewardship and say, "Look, this is what this congregation did; here's a

person who expressed his love for the Lord Jesus by making a great contribution to missions." Then we pat these people on the back as though they have done something wonderful, whereas the first thing that we should do is thank God that there are such people. There are people like this only because God has done something in them. God called them to be saints. God aroused this love in their hearts. God created this faith from which their love flows. So wherever you see examples of Christian virtue you ought to remember first of all that thanks for this belongs to God. As we sing: "The good in me to Thee I trace" (TLH 375:5). So we thank God for the example of the Roman Christians. We don't thank the Romans, although it wouldn't be wrong to do so. We can thank a congregation for its fine demonstration of some Christian virtue. The Bible does that too (Romans 16:2,4,12; Revelation 2:1-3, etc.). But in this passage Paul thanks God that the faith of the Romans is spoken of throughout the world.

Some might say, "Now wait a minute! How can that be the whole world? America wasn't even discovered when Paul wrote this." This is how some people try to say that the Bible isn't inerrant. People like that ought to study language a bit. The whole world doesn't always mean this earth. When we say that God created the world we mean the whole universe - sun, moon, stars, everything in it. When we say "Around the world in eighty days" this means only this earth, not the universe. Or I say, "He lives in a world all his own," his own little circle. And the word circle isn't literally understood either. It is claimed that people writing the Bible thought the world was square because they talked about the four corners of the earth (Revelation 7:1). Just as ridiculous! That's like "brightening the corner where you are." Where are you going to do that? I used to go fishing with my father and he would say, "Row over to that corner." That would get me so mad because I could never see any corner. What he meant was "that part of the lake." So when you talk about the four corners of the earth this doesn't necessarily mean that you think the world is square.

"The whole world" for Paul, as it was for the people of his time, was the Mediterranean world. I took a course at the University of Chicago with the title, "The Mediterranean World." That simply means the countries around the Mediterranean Sea. So when Paul talks here about the whole world he means the Christian world or the Mediterranean world, the world that Paul knew. "The world of the N.T." means the countries in which the stories in the N.T. took place. Paul certainly isn't guilty of making a mistake because America hadn't been discovered.

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (1:9). This is the second time we've had the word "spirit." Paul speaks of flesh and spirit in reference to human beings. My "spirit" refers to my new converted nature. "With my new man, with my new converted nature," Paul says, "I serve God in the gospel of his Son." The gospel is the sphere of his service. Including the Roman Christians in his prayers was part of his Christian service. A Christian teacher or pastor ought to do the same thing. Remember to pray often for your students and congregation members.

"Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1:10,11). "I've asked for this, that after so long a time it might be the will of God that I should come to visit you, because I've had a strong desire to see you." Paul had heard about them; many of them he knew, as we see in chapter 16. "I want to come to Rome," he says, "so that I may share with you the blessings of the gospel."

"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (1:12). Paul wants to come to Rome to do something for them, but he also says that they can do something for him when he gets there. "Comforted ... by the mutual faith ..." We will be comforted by one another's faith. I never really understood that either, until I thought of this passage when I had an experience that really impressed me. A member of my congregation was hopelessly crippled by arthritis and in constant pain. He never missed coming to church every Sunday unless he

was bedridden. He couldn't lift his feet; he just shuffled into and out of church. I always shook hands at the door. Once in a while I'd forget when I shook hands with him; I'd use a little pressure, and he'd just jump with pain. He was a veteran of World War I. The doctor decided that he should go to the veterans' hospital in Des Moines to have a complete checkup to see if they couldn't do something for him. This was before the days of cortisone. They said that they could do nothing for him.

It so happened that we had Ladies Aid the day that he came home again after being gone for six weeks. His wife told me that he was home, so after I finished my devotion with the ladies I got in my car and went over to visit him. He was sitting outside on the front lawn on a rocking chair. I walked over to him, and I was feeling awfully blue because they hadn't been able to do anything for him. I expressed my disappointment that they had said he'd have to live with this for the rest of his life. He was a relatively young man at the time. I guess I must have sounded a bit sad because he said, "Now Reverend, don't feel badly about it; you know it's only temporary." Well, this is what I should have told him; he's the one that had to say, "This is only temporary." That's what Paul said: "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). I'll never forget that as long as I live because this fellow did me a lot of good. And I'm sure that every pastor and teacher can point to many incidents like this. The youngsters you teach often do you a lot of good. It's really faith-strengthening to see how little children just believe the gospel with no reservations at all. There isn't a doubt in their minds that Jesus loves them. It's a wonderful experience to hear them sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." We are comforted by one another's faith.

I've seen how it is possible for a Christian to bear up under the most trying circumstances and still remain cheerful, resigned and happy. Once I went to visit a lady whose husband had just died. She was sitting on the davenport in the living room I said, "How are you?" She said, "Just fine. It's wonderful how the Lord gives you strength at a time like this. I was afraid of what I might do if anything like this would happen. It is just wonderful the way the Lord gives you strength to bear up under it." She was completely satisfied and happy, although I knew that she was heartbroken in another sense. When you see people like this you begin to understand what Paul is talking about: "... that I may be comforted together with you by (our) mutual faith ..." (1:12). The pastor needs the strengthening the congregation gives him as they share "some spiritual gift" (1:11); the teacher needs the strengthening that she will find in her students. I'm sure that those of you who have taught Sunday School know what Paul is talking about.

"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (1:13). "Many times in the past I made up my mind to come to you, but I was hindered." The word "let" here means hindered. In legal terminology we say "let or hindrance." It's like assault and battery, two words for the same act. "I was prevented up to this time from coming to you."

When Paul talks about "fruit" he speaks in a figurative sense. The fruit of his labor would be converts. Paul's work was to make converts for the gospel. He was commissioned by God to open the blind eyes and to turn men to God, as he himself says (Acts 26:18). So here he speaks of those converts which he makes through the gospel as being a fruit of his labor. He wants to make some converts also among the Romans and strengthen the faith of the believers by his preaching.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (1:14,15). It's very evident from the way he talks about himself as a debtor that Paul thinks of himself as owing the gospel to these people and to the rest of the Gentiles. This is a thought that we all could take to heart. We owe the gospel to the rest of the world. So often, when we do something for missions,

when we support the work of the church, we feel like complimenting ourselves. We feel that we deserve some sort of credit for this. But all you're doing is paying your debts. You don't expect anybody to call out a brass band when you go down to pay your bills. We're just doing what the Lord expects of us when we go out preaching the gospel. The Lord has given it to us to share with the rest of the world, so we owe it to the world. We are debtors to the Greeks and barbarians, Paul says.

"Barbarian" has a different meaning in this particular context - not a savage and uncivilized person, but anyone who didn't speak Greek. The Greeks called people barbarians even when they were much more civilized than the Greeks. The Macedonians called the Persians barbarians, but the Persians were a highly civilized people compared to the Macedonians who were a pretty rough lot. A few of them had an education but most of them were real tough soldiers. A "barbarian" originally was a babbler. To a Greek-speaking person the speech of the barbarian was just "bar-bar-bar-bar-bar." Because Greek was the language of the learned world at the time of St. Paul, "Greek" came to stand for an educated person and "barbarian" meant an uneducated person. The man who could speak Greek had some sort of education; the man who couldn't speak Greek was uneducated. Here "Greeks, and ... Barbarians" is parallel to "wise, and ... unwise" (1:14). We owe the gospel to all classes of people, Paul says here, to the educated and the uneducated, the highest and the lowest classes of society.

Here again we can learn a real lesson. Most of us are pretty much in the habit of thinking of church members as belonging to the middle class. We hesitate to go canvassing in areas like Fox Point where wealthy people live. It's probably a little more difficult to canvass there. Often the only person you get to see is the maid, not the people who own the house. You have to find another way to get to these people. We can't just ignore them.

On the other hand, we also tend to ignore the lower classes of society, leaving these people to the Salvation Army. But if we have the gospel in its truth and purity, then we ought to recognize that we owe it not only to the middle class, but to the most cultured, the most educated, and the lowest members of society as well. This is certainly the thought that Paul expresses here in 1:14,15. The thought expressed by "as much as in me is" would be: "If it's possible for me to do it." These verses tell you some of the historical facts about Paul's relationship with this congregation.

The introduction of Paul's letter goes through verse 15. In verses 16 and 17 you have what might be called the theme of the letter. The title for chapters 1 - 3 would be "The Universal Depravity of Mankind," or "The Sinfulness of All Men." Chapter 1 - The sinfulness of the Gentile world. Chapter 2 - The sinfulness of the Jewish world. Chapter 3 lumps the whole bunch together and says that they are all a bunch of sinners.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (1:16). Paul had good reason for saying, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." The gospel of Christ was the preaching of "Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Paul was coming to Rome to preach about a Savior who had died on a cross. To us that doesn't sound like something to be greatly ashamed of. But this is only because we don't understand the culture in which Paul wrote these words. There couldn't be anything much more offensive than preaching about the Son of God who died on a cross. Nowadays we don't even know what the cross means. People wear it as an ornament. You can wear a cross on your coat lapel or dress, as they used to say on The Lutheran Hour when they handed out crosses as gifts to listeners who would write in; and they wrote in by the millions. People like to have one of these little gold crosses; girls wear them on chains around their necks. We put crosses on our church steeples; you come to church and see a cross in front on the altar. Now if you would come to church some Sunday morning and sit in the pew, bow your head for prayer, then look toward the altar and see another object that was unmistakably a replica of an electric chair,

what would you say? Or what would you say if you saw some girl wearing a little gold electric chair on a chain around her neck? It's a gruesome thought, isn't it? Do you think they'd sell many of those in the store? It sounds almost like blasphemy if I talk about a goldplated electric chair on the altar; it makes me uneasy to talk about it. But that's exactly what you're doing when you put a cross up on the altar, because that's what the cross was to the Romans. They had just one use for a cross. It wasn't set up on the altars of the temples. It wasn't worn by people as a decoration. The only place where crosses stood was on the place of execution - on death row in the penitentiaries we'd say in our terms. The cross was used for the most depraved criminals, for slaves and non-Romans. A Roman citizen couldn't be crucified.

Cicero (106-43 B.C.) was one of the greatest of the Roman lawyers. The law said that a Roman citizen's body could never be nailed to a cross. When the question of crucifixion was raised by one of the prosecuting attorneys in a Roman court, Cicero got up and said that the cross was such a shameful thing that it ought to be absent not only from the body of a Roman citizen, as the law said, but that it ought to be absent from his eyes and his ears, and his thoughts as well. Cicero lived about a century before Paul came to Rome to preach "Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). The Roman attitude about crosses hadn't changed. Can you imagine coming into a society like this and saying, "I've come to tell you about the Savior who came down from heaven, the Son of God. I've come to tell about the great deeds which he did for your salvation." And the Romans would say, "If he did great deeds to save everybody he must have been a great warrior." That's how the Romans saved people; they sent the legions to fight for the defense of a city. And now Paul says, "You know how he saved us? By dying on a cross!" You can imagine what that sounded like to people who didn't even think that they ought to hear the word "cross." To speak of a crucified Savior was such a contradiction in terms as far as the Roman civilization was concerned that we just can't put ourselves into that situation. But I think you understand why Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I am going to preach this crucified Christ in Rome as I have preached him elsewhere."

Now you say we don't have that problem with crosses anymore. True, but the gospel of Christ has a lot of other aspects that are offensive to people. If you go out and preach the Bible you are soon going to find out what it means to be made ashamed of what you are preaching. Start with Genesis 1. You tell people that you still believe that the world was created in six days, and they look at you as if you had been born 100 years ago, at least before 1859. Don't you know what happened in 1859? Darwin (1809-1882) published The Origin of Species. "You mean to tell me that you still believe the world was created in six days?" And you have to say, "Yes." You're behind the times, out of step with the rest of the world, if you believe that. "You mean to say that you believe that the sun stood still when Joshua told it to stand still? (Joshua 10:12-14). You believe that all those miracles in the Bible really happened? You believe the story of the fall, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ? You believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, that the Bible is without mistakes?"

When I was at Chicago University I was taking a course under --- who had us write a paper on "The Problem of God." So I wrote what I thought was a decent paper for this course on psychology and religion, respectable from an intellectual point of view. I called it "The Problem of God To You." I started by saying, "To me God is no problem. I know that he is my loving Father in Jesus Christ." Then I went on for 15 pages trying to justify this position from what I thought was an intellectually respectable point of view. Several weeks later he came to class and said, "I've read all your papers. None of you know what I wanted. You haven't the slightest idea what is involved in the question. You don't know what you are talking about. There is one fellow in this class who knows what he wants, and he's insane. All Catholics and all those Protestants who accept the Bible as authoritative are insane. We let them run around loose as long as they are socially tolerable. But the day may come when we will have to shut them up." This was in a university class! Then he started describ-



ing this paper. "Here is a man who thinks that everything in the Bible is true. Here is a man who thinks that Christ is God, and that he died for the sins of the world. Typical 17th Century theologian! Nobody believes that anymore today, that is, nobody who is intellectually respectable."

So after class I went up to him in the hall and said, "Do you know that that was my paper you were commenting on this morning?" And he said, "Is your name Becker?" I said, "Yes." He didn't know this, of course, but he knew my name. He said, "Are you a Lutheran?" "Yes." "Missouri Synod?" "Yes." "I thought so. That's the only place in the world where you still find that kind of benighted theology." Then he told me how --- was going to give the Missouri Synod a respectable theology - which has happened.

But --- said, "Anybody who believes in the doctrine of verbal inspiration will get a degree from this school over my dead body. Anybody who believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible is unfit to do any scholarly work because a scholar must be ready to doubt everything. There is nothing sure in this world. If you did research that led you to a conclusion out of harmony with the Scriptures you would say that there was something wrong with your research - and that's not scholarly." He said something about being intolerant of other views, and I said, "There's only one difference between you and me. I admit that I'm intolerant, but you're intolerant too. I don't claim to be tolerant of other points of view; I know they're wrong. But you ought to be tolerant of me according to your own principles." He said, "I'm tolerant of everything but intolerance." I said, "One big difference between us is that I insist that there is such a thing as absolute truth and you say that a man can never be sure of anything." He said, "That's right." I said, "Well, don't you be so sure of that, then, because if you can't be sure of anything you ought not even be sure of the fact that you can't be sure of anything."

We had a real fine discussion for a couple of hours. It was absolutely hopeless. He simply refused to admit that anybody who was unwilling to contradict the Bible was fit to do any kind of scholarly work. This is the attitude you meet in the scholarly world. He wasn't interested in the next world. I asked him, "What do you do with the immortality of the soul?" He said, "I'm a theologian, not a philosopher; I'm not interested. The question of the immortality of the soul is a purely philosophical question, nothing that a theologian should be concerned about."

He believes that God exists, but that he is not supernatural. God is in nature. God is the creator of all that is good; but the creator of all that is good is an impersonal something. The source of human good is qualitative meaning, as he defines it. He got this from --- who also was a professor at Chicago years ago. Qualitative meaning is that relationship which is productive of something more than is inherent in objects before they are brought to a relationship with each other. That's not a very hard idea to explain. The idea is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. When you have all the parts of an automobile scattered over a field, the whole car is there, but these parts have not as yet been brought into the proper relationship with each other. When you put the parts of an automobile together in the right way, then you have something that is more valuable than those parts are by themselves. In the same way, when you bring human beings together in the right relationship, then more value has been created. This creating of new value is the whole process of creation. This is God at work. This quality in nature according to which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts is God. But God is a purely naturalistic idea; there is nothing beyond or above nature. That's his view of God.

(Q.) How can Lutheran pastors believe that there is an almighty God and then say that creation didn't happen as the Bible said? How can they not believe in miracles if they believe in an almighty God? (A.) They would say that your question is wrong, because you are equating what the Bible says with what God says - and that's where you make your mistake. They say, "This is not true in the Bible; but that doesn't mean that God couldn't do this. God can create the world in six days if he

wants to, but we know better today; we know he didn't. How do we know he didn't? Because the scientists tell us so. There is all kinds of evidence in nature that the world came into existence by the process of evolution. We aren't limiting the power of God. All we are saying is that you can't depend on the Bible as being the absolute truth. In fact, you can't depend on any statement as being absolute truth. The truth of God is so high and holy that it can never be captured in human language. You're limiting God when you say that you can capture God's wisdom in human language."

Certainly we are limited by human language in our understanding of God. Yet the point is that when God uses human language to express his truth, then we can be perfectly confident that this is the truth. However, you always have to remember that we "know in part" (1 Corinthians 13:12). But they always interpret that in the wrong way as though our knowledge is faulty. "We don't know anything for sure," they say. We would say that "know in part" means we know only a part of God and God's will; we know that part of God which he has revealed to us. This is the way the Bible expresses it in Deuteronomy (29:29). "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but these things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." They really belong to us. God told us these things, and what we know we know for sure. But they always insist that you don't really know anything and that you can't be confident that God's revelation has ever been expressed correctly.

If you follow that argument out logically, then you'll have to say that God's wisdom is so high and so holy that it can never be captured in human language. Then you take the next step and say that God's nature is so high and majestic that it can never be comprehended by a human being. But the Bible says that "in him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). This is the general attitude, that if you believe in the Bible you're not fit for scholarly work.

We often feel that the public schools are neutral; but they aren't. There is a religion taught in the public schools in America that is just as much a religion as the religion of the heathen in Africa and China or India or wherever it might be. It is secularism. It's a religious attitude. This is one thing that we should keep in mind, too, when we approach the whole problem of the public school and the parochial school. That doesn't mean that every public school teacher is going to be a secularist. But generally speaking the religion of American education is secularism and moralism. The public schools are interested in teaching people not to steal and lie, etc. They certainly don't deny the existence of God. This pressure for prayer in the public schools is not an accident. Everybody thinks it is good to pray, except for a few atheists like Madalyn Murray. Generally, everybody agrees that it would be good to have prayers in the public schools. I think that most Americans don't care whether you have prayers or not. If you have, they say that's fine; if you don't, that's all right too. But you can get by with a lot worse than this in the public schools.

Max Otto taught philosophy at the University of Wisconsin. He was a popular teacher, well known all over the country. He wrote Science and the Moral Life, in which he said that any religion that points men to a heaven beyond this earth destroys the possibility of human progress. A religion that tries to comfort people with the assurance of a better life after this one isn't in man's best interests because people will be satisfied to take things the way they are and say that there is a better life coming. If only people didn't have this idea, they would work harder to make this a better world while they have the chance. He wasn't opposed to religion in general - just the religions that speak of a life after death. But the moral life is something that we should teach people, they say.

You can teach anything you want to as long as you don't insist that it's right. Nobody ever told me in the Missouri Synod, "You can't teach this; you can't teach that." The only thing I was expected to do was not say that the other fellow was wrong. President --- said, "I want you to know that ---'s opinion has as much right

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on this campus as your's. This man was saying that the day that Joshua told the sun to stand still was no longer than any other day; it just seemed longer. Just because the Bible says that Moses wrote something doesn't mean that he wrote it. Or, it's no longer a question whether or not the Bible makes mistakes; the question is, what are we going to do with the mistakes that the Bible makes? This sort of thing you are supposed to recognize as being Lutheran! You're supposed to say, "He has a right to his opinion. I happen to disagree with him, but I might be wrong too." You must respect other opinions as being perfectly Lutheran opinions. Insisting that you're right is the one thing that the world won't tolerate.

This morning in chapel Professor Lutz spoke of the pope being the Antichrist. One youngster who isn't a Lutheran, who attends school here from another church, got up and walked out. That's something you have to bear. Do you think that somebody likes to have someone walk out while he's speaking? A person could be sick, but it was pretty obvious what happened. If you went out in the streets of Milwaukee and said that the pope is the Antichrist, what do you suppose would happen to you? Can you imagine what would happen to the reputation of this school, at least for a few days, if you did this, and it got into the Milwaukee Journal? Yet that is our position. The trouble is that we live in a sheltered community. Some of you who have to deal with people outside the church quite often and speak of your faith know more about this than the rest of you do.

Of course, while you should confess the truth, you shouldn't harp on it in such a way as to unnecessarily offend people and drive them away. The occasion will arise when the truth can be spoken in a fit situation. Right now there is an opportunity to talk about the pope. We saw the adulation that was poured out on the Antichrist. I think that this was a perfectly good antidote. I think we all get the notion that Pope Paul is a pretty good fellow, but he is still the man who is at the head of the church which damns anyone who believes that he is saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Council of Trent). When the pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ on earth, it must be refuted on the basis of the Bible. When he says that, I think you ought to say, "You say that you're the Vicar of Christ; I say that you're the Antichrist." We ought to say this; but we don't want to keep harping on it all the time. It's something that people don't like especially in these days of ecumenicity.

You'll find out that there are plenty of times when a person might be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (1:16). When the WELS opposes Boy Scouts, for instance, it certainly isn't one of our major doctrines. But if you say to someone who doesn't understand the situation, "There is something wrong with scouting," you can just bet your bottom dollar that people are going to think that there's something wrong with you. "Against Boy Scouts? For goodness sake, what did they ever do?" On the surface it does look a little silly. If I were talking to somebody about the WELS position I would keep the Boy Scouts in the background until the fellow knows who the true God is. Once you convince somebody who the true God is I don't think you'll have much trouble with the Boy Scouts.

It's the same with the Masonic Lodge. When I instructed adults for confirmation I made it a point not to mention the lodges until the last lesson of the course. Then I talked about it and told them why no Mason could be an honest member of the Lutheran Church. Then it usually isn't hard to convince them. But if you say you are opposed to the lodges without saying anything more, they'll think you're absolutely batty. This is part of being "ashamed of the gospel of Christ." (1:16). Why are we opposed to the lodges? Because of what they do to the gospel of Christ, denying the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone. When they say in their Masonic burial ritual, "By the pass of a blameless life he has attained to the Grand Lodge above." When they omit the name of Jesus Christ from their prayers. Or when they deliberately omit the name of Jesus Christ from the Bible passages and say that it is a slight but necessary modification of the Bible. When you oppose the lodges you are being loyal to the gospel; when you let down the bars you are ashamed of the

gospel of Christ. Certainly, if you really go out and confess your faith, you're going to have experiences in which people look at you and think you are not right in the head because you believe and teach these things.

The only reason that so many people say that the Bible is a good book is because they have never read it. You tell people, for instance, that you believe that God is a holy God who will punish every sin, which is also a part of preaching God's Word. It takes you immediately to the cross at Calvary; that's where God punished every sin; that's why Jesus had to die. When you tell people that God is going to punish every sin with eternal damnation in hell, they'll say, "I'll have nothing to do with talk like that; people haven't believed in a God like that since the Middle Ages." Which means, of course, that if you still believe in a God like this you really belong in the Middle Ages instead of the 20th Century.

There are many similar situations in which you might say, "I'm not going to say anything. I'm not going to confess the truth before these people because I know what they're going to say." If you take that attitude, you are "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (1:16). That doesn't mean that you have to go out and deliberately stir up opposition. There are some people who just delight in getting other people mad. This should not be our purpose in preaching the gospel of Christ. The purpose of the gospel is always to save. It's a bad business to stir people up so that they close their ears to everything else that you have to say. We must keep a very sane and sober position here. "Be sober minded" (Titus 2:6). Be as "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). There is a way of telling people some of these things without becoming personally offensive. I've told people that they're going to hell, and had them thank me for my interest in their souls - in a sarcastic way, probably, but still they didn't become angry about this.

I remember telling one lady that she was going to hell, and she looked at me and said, "You really believe that, don't you?" And I said, "Yes. I believe that you are going to hell." And she said, "If you believe that, you ought to be here trying to convert me." She didn't resent this. She didn't believe it either; but at least she had been told, and she knew that I believed that what I had told her was the truth. You can tell someone that they are going to hell, and you can say it in a way that it sounds like "Go to hell" rather than "You're going to hell" - as though you can't wait until it happens. Don't stir up opposition where it is unnecessary; but never, never should we trim our sails to the wind. We ought to say what has to be said, speak the fitting word (Proverbs 25:11); and if people don't like it, if they ridicule you because of it, this is simply the cross that you have to be willing to bear. That's not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

So Paul took this attitude, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (1:16). Why not? "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This gospel is a powerful thing. It really has to be a powerful thing to convince people. When you go out and preach the gospel, you are saying things that the natural man simply will not believe. You will tell people that the Son of God was born of a virgin; that the mighty God came into this world as a little baby, helpless and weak; that in this person, the carpenter at Nazareth, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); that this is God in every sense of the term. When you tell them of the miracles of Christ, that he changed water into wine (John 2:1-11), fed five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish (Mark 6:35-44), made the blind see and the lame walk and the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, cleansed the lepers (Matthew 11:5), drove out devils (Matthew 8:28-32) and raised the dead (John 12:1) - you tell all these stories, and to the world that sounds like nothing but fairy tales.

The sophisticated name some people use for such stories is myths. They say that myths express wonderful truths. The feeding of the five thousand says mythologically that God feeds all men. And the stilling of the storm tells us that God

controls all nature. Of course, this never happened, they say. With the resurrection of Christ you get the wonderful idea that no situation is ever hopeless; out of the ruins of a dead and dying civilization a new and better civilization will always arise. This is the attitude that many theologians take. They are ashamed of the gospel. But here we are in the 20th Century, in this enlightened age, preaching that Christ really could feed five thousand with so little food, etc. Suppose that someone at a picnic would say, "I see that you didn't bring any lunch. I'm going to divide my sandwiches here and feed you." Since he's only a man that would be blasphemy. Or, if he really meant it, you'd call for some men in a strait jacket.

No wonder the Jews crucified Jesus for blasphemy (Mark 14:64). They were pretty sure that he wasn't insane, although they had their doubts about that too. "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils" (Mark 3:22). But we preach all this as though we were living 2000 years ago. The world kids itself when they say, "Years ago they used to believe this stuff." Try telling the Lord Jesus this 2000 years ago, that in his day they believed. "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" (John 12:37). They didn't believe it then any more than they believe it today. Jesus had a handful of followers when he died, 120 in Jerusalem (Acts 1:15), 500 after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6), probably one of the largest groups. These are the things that we preach; these are the things we ought not be ashamed of, "for it is the power of God unto salvation."

What makes people believers? How do they become believers in all these miracles such as the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ, etc.? Is it because we are more intelligent than the rest of them? A lot of unbelievers are more intelligent than we are. So often Christians have a tendency to say, "How can they be so stupid as not to believe all that?" The world turns around and says, "How can they be so stupid as to believe it?" Luther said, "The gospel was written for imbeciles like us." The reasonable point of view is that the Christian is stupid. We don't know what it means to live in this spiritual blindness into which men are born. We've been brought up with this gospel since we were little. These people are not stupid; they are just depraved. They are born in sin. That's where their problem lies. Why do we believe? Not because we're born any less in sin than they are; but the gospel has been for us the power of God unto salvation (1:16). The gospel has the power within itself to create this response that it calls for. Thus it brings salvation to men through faith. We believe these things, that Christ the Son of God died for our sins, and that he was raised again on the third day for our justification (Romans 4:25). We come to this faith through the power of the gospel.

"To the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (1:16). Here Paul has a slightly different classification of men than he had before. Before he spoke of the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the unwise (1:14). Jews and Greeks today would be the equivalent of church members and non-church members. It's for all people, whether they are members of the church or outside of the church. The Jews were the chosen people; the Greeks were representatives of the Gentile world. The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" for everyone of these.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (1:17). This was the passage that disturbed Luther a great deal. In his preface to his Latin works, which he wrote to the end of his life, Luther said that he hated this phrase, "the righteousness of God," because when he thought of the righteousness of God he thought of the righteousness which God has, the active righteousness of God according to which he is just and holy, a righteous Judge. And what does a righteous judge always do with criminals? He punishes them. Luther saw himself as a sinner before God. When he read about the righteousness of God he was reminded that God is righteous, a God who will punish all sinners. And he said, "Is that the kind of God that is revealed in the gospel? Isn't it enough that he condemns us in the law?" Luther knew that the word "gospel" means "good news." "And that good news tells me how righteous God is?" Luther said, "I

didn't love the righteous God; I hated him. But in the fall of 1519 I was lecturing on the Psalms. I turned to the N.T. for help in interpreting Psalms. There I finally discovered that the righteousness of God is not the righteousness which God has, but the righteousness which God gives, the passive righteousness which God gives me. In the Scriptures I found a lot of other phrases like this which made it very plain that the righteousness of God can also be understood as the righteousness which I have before God." So when Luther translated Romans 1:17 a year later, he translated it, "die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt." "The righteousness which avails before God."

One of the finest phrases in the Bible to help you understand the meaning of this phrase is John 12:43. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." It starts already with v. 37. Among the chief rulers we know of at least two who believed in Jesus: Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea (John 19:38,39). There were others too. But many "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." When you hear the phrase, "praise of God," what comes to mind? A hymn. This is "the praise of God," the praise that we give to God, when we sing hymns. Is that what "praise of God" means in this case? These people would not confess Jesus before the Pharisees because they didn't want to be put out of the synagogue (John 12:42). If they would have confessed their faith in Jesus as the Son of God, what would the Jews have said about them? "Art thou also of Galilee?" (John 7:52). When Nicodemus asked the Jewish council, "Does our law condemn a man before he has had a fair trial?" (John 7:51), the other members of the Sanhedrin said to him, "Art thou also of Galilee?" To call a man a Galilaean in those days was like calling him a hillbilly today. "Are you also one of those hillbillies? What's the matter with you?" These people didn't like to hear that sort of thing. They loved the praises that they got from men more than the praise of God. What would God have said about them if they had confessed Jesus? Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). But they didn't think of this. They were just concerned about their reputation in the sight of the rest of the world. So in this case "the praise of God" is not the praise which you give God, but the praise that you get from God.

So also "the righteousness of God" (1:17) is not the righteousness which God has, but the righteousness which God gives me when he justifies me. It is a bit hard to see the relationship of these words in English, but in Greek the "righteousness" of God is dikaioσunē (1). The word "to justify" is dikaioō (2). The word for "just" is dikaios (3). Now if (2) is "justify" and (1) is "righteousness," you know that something happened in English, don't you? The first letters of these Greek words are all the same. If (1) is "righteousness," (2) should be "righteousify," and (3) is "righteous." If (3) is "just," (2) is "justify," and (1) is "justness" instead of "righteousness." Thus you preserve the relationship between these words.

Later on (3:27-28) we're going to say a great deal about this word "justify." It means "to declare somebody righteous" from the law. When God justifies me he declares me righteous. When God declares me righteous, what do I have? Righteousness. This is "the righteousness of God." You would never know that from reading this particular verse (1:17); you dig out this meaning of "the righteousness of God" by reading the rest of Romans. I suppose that when the Roman Christians got to this point they might have wondered, "What does Paul mean by the righteousness of God?" But after you read the first five chapters of Romans there is no doubt at all of what Paul means. It is the righteousness which God gives me; or, as Luther said, the righteousness which I have when God says, "You are not guilty for Christ's sake."

The phrase, "from faith to faith" (1:17) used to bother me a lot because I couldn't make any sense of it. There are some good Lutheran theologians with whom I disagree on the meaning of this phrase. Some think that "from faith to faith" means from one person's faith to another person's faith. I don't think that this can stand because the righteousness of God can also be revealed by an unbeliever. Others say that this means that as the gospel is preached we grow in faith. We go from a weaker

faith to a stronger faith. Nothing would be doctrinally wrong with that. It could stand as far as the teachings of the Bible are concerned.

Let me tell you what I think the words mean. A righteousness of God which comes through faith stands in contrast to a righteousness which comes from works. People by nature think that they are going to be righteous before God by living a good life. ("By the pass of a blameless life he has attained to the Grand Lodge above.") This is the normal attitude that people have. They expect that someday they will stand before the judgment throne of God (Revelation 20:11-15). This view is found also in the heathen religions. This is something that a man's heart tells him. They all think: "I've done a lot of wrong things in life; but I've done some good things too." They think that God is going to put the good deeds on one side and the bad deeds on the other side, and they have no doubt that the good deeds will outweigh the bad ones. They always remember and comfort themselves with some good deed that they have done in their life. They always went to church; they've always been a good husband, a good wife, a good father or mother. They always saw to it that the kids had enough to wear, enough to eat. This is what they talk about. It's pretty hard to persuade someone that he's not going to be declared innocent by God because of extenuating circumstances: "I did the best I could; I did the best I knew how." That is justification by works.

Now the gospel comes and tells me about a righteousness without works, a righteousness which is "from faith" (1:17). Why do I tell people that they will be justified by believing in Christ, not by works? What do I hope will come of that? Faith, a saving faith. When I get in my automobile to drive to Chicago, I expect that when I finish driving I'm going to be in Chicago. In the same way, I preach the gospel "to faith" (1:17), that at the end of my preaching faith may result. I preach about a righteousness which comes "from faith" because I want people to come "to faith." So the righteousness of God is revealed as being "from faith" in order that the outcome might be faith in the hearts of those who hear it, who come "to faith." I'm practically convinced that this is the right understanding of this phrase. Only the word order in the Greek makes me hesitate to say that this is the best interpretation.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (1:18). This verse begins a new section. It stands in contrast to 1:17, which says that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. God's wrath is also revealed from heaven, but not in the gospel. The wrath of God is revealed in the law. The gospel proclaims the righteousness of God. Before Paul speaks of the righteousness of God he is going to talk about the other side of the picture, the wrath of God which is also revealed.

This verse is the theme for the rest of the chapter. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (1:18). Ungodliness is the failure to give God all the honor and glory to which he is entitled; ungodliness is lack of respect for God, failure to honor God. Unrighteousness in this context is the failure to treat our fellowman as God wants us to treat him. The ungodliness of men is described in 1:19-23, which talks about the idolatry of the world. The unrighteousness of men is described in 1:26-32, which shows the immorality of the heathen world. You can say that 1:19-23 speaks of the failure of men to keep the first table of the Law, and 1:26-32 speaks of the failure of men to keep the second table of the Law.

"Who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (1:18). Here's a place where the original language would help you. The word used by Paul really means "to hold something down." To "hold" something usually means to possess it. "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13) comes to mind. But the word Paul uses means to "hold down," to suppress something. "They suppress the truth in their unrighteousness."

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (1:19). That which may be known about God is the truth about God. The

truth which they suppress is plain, or clear to them because God has showed it to them. And how God did this Paul tells us in the next verse.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (1:20). Paul is talking about the heathen world which is sunken in idolatry. This idolatrous world knows God; it knows the truth about God but it suppresses the truth about God. The things that they know about God are plain to them. It is true that God is invisible. "The invisible things" about God are all of God's attributes, all of God's essence. But the attributes and essence of God are known to men in some measure "by the things that are made." You can find out something about God just from looking at the created world. You can learn about his eternal power and Godhead. If he made the world he is before the world. His eternity is manifest by the very fact that somebody must have made this world; time and space are all part of what God made. He is also a very powerful God. The human mind has to conclude that somebody must have made this world. It is only by a deliberate act of his will that a man can deny this.

No atheist is ever born; an atheist is always made. An atheist is somebody who has deliberately removed something from his mind. He has performed a mental operation on himself. True atheists are probably pretty rare. How rare they are ought to be clear from the doxology that was often sung as the closing hymn of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism - I think it's pretty dead now. This group sang the hymn: "Blame God, from whom all cyclones blow. / Blame him when rivers overflow. / Blame him who throws down house and steeple, / Drowns the flocks and kills the people." Isn't that a ridiculous hymn for an atheist to sing? If there is no God, why blame him - right? So even in their atheism they still proclaim the fact that there is a God. They really aren't so much atheists as they are enemies of God. They are haters of God. An atheist will say, "I certainly do believe in something; I believe in man." He doesn't believe in a personal God, a God beyond this world. That's what he says. But most atheists remind me of Shakespeare's line, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks" (Hamlet, III,ii,242). Most atheists are too excited about the whole question of God to be real atheists. They remind me of how a boy whistles when he goes past the cemetery at night.

Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), the British scientist, claimed that he was an atheist. He said, "It is amazing what a weight is lifted from a man's heart once he convinces himself that there is no God." I think Huxley has convinced himself, since he talks that way. But what was he protesting when he said that a great weight was lifted from his heart once he convinced himself that there is no God? He was afraid. It weighed on his heart. That's exactly how it should be. At least he did some serious thinking, unlike so many people who just put it out of their minds until it's too late. They ignore God in their daily living, but when an emergency arises they are always ready to call on him. They say that there are no atheists in foxholes. It's said so often that it is rather trite to say it again.

The unbelieving and heathen world knows that there is an eternal and powerful Godhead. That's an old English word. Today we would say Godhood, Godness. This refers to his divine essence, his state of being God; like Heiligkeit, in German, is the state of being holy. "They know his divinity, his deity," would be another way to translate it. They know that there is a God, and something of his nature and essence.

Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954), the great anthropologist, wrote a large work called The Origin of the Idea of God (1912) in which he showed very definitely that the heathen are all originally monotheistic. They all know this God who made the world. Some years ago the Theological Quarterly printed a story about an African traveler who was making a safari into the jungle. The native bearers were, of course, all animists, the lowest type of heathen you could find, worshippers of sticks and stones - what the anthropologists would call primitive people in the evolutionary sense as



far as religion is concerned. One day when they were marching through the jungle a terrific storm came up with lightning and crashing thunder. The native bearers dropped their burdens, fell on their knees, and raised their hands to the sky screaming "Abasi, abasi!" Later the European traveler asked the leader of the bearers, "What was that word you used? I never heard you say it before." The chief began to tremble and shake, and said, "We never use that word." But the traveler insisted until finally the chief told him, "We never say 'Abasi' because that is the name of the only true God there is. He rules the heavens far away. We never use his name except when we are in real bad trouble." Otherwise they're satisfied with sticks and stones; but when they're in real trouble they call on Abasi, the only God there is. (On Abasi, cf. We Move Into Africa, by Henry Nau. Concordia, St. Louis MO, 1945, p. 162.)

I spoke to a Baptist missionary from the Belgian Congo some years ago. He told about visiting with a native chief in his tent. The chief was sick and bedridden, lying on a mat on the floor. While they were visiting, one of the wives who took turns bringing him food came in. She set this tray next to his mat and left - they don't eat in the presence of women. Before he began to eat this chief reached under the covers and pulled out a little bit of a statue, roughly made in the shape of a human being. This stick was pointed at the end, and he shoved it into the ground next to his plate. The missionary asked, "Why do you do this?" He said, "It's a god who protects me because my wives are all putting poison in my food. But I never eat until I set this god next to my tray, and he keeps the poison from hurting me. If it hadn't been for this god I'd have been dead by now." The missionary said, "That's just a stick carved by human beings, and it can't possibly help you." Finally the chief said, "I know all that, that it really isn't a god. My God is in the sky, the only God there is. He's the God who made all the other gods, but he is so high and holy and far above us that he doesn't have time for us. So he commissions these other gods to take care of us. The power of this god comes from the God who lives in the sky."

In that same territory these natives speak of this God who lives in the sky as Umoulu, which means the Old One, the Ancient One, "the Ancient of days" (Daniel 7:9,22). Why should they call him the Old One? He is the God whose "eternal power and Godhead" (1:20) Paul writes about. They know this, but they still pray to these sticks and stones. Even the ancient Greeks spoke of Zeus as the father of gods and men. If he is the father of all the gods, you'll have to say that they are minor gods. If you ever want to read a good book on this, one of the best is Samuel Zwemer's The Origin of God. He spent his lifetime as a missionary to the Mohammedans. In his short book he shows pretty clearly on the basis of anthropological studies that all the heathen are originally monotheistic. It's remarkable how this truth is demonstrated by such studies of primitive religions even when anthropologists don't study this from the biblical point of view. Many instances could be cited.

Now Paul says, "They know about this God and his attributes from the things that are made, so they are without excuse" (1:20) for being what they are. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (1:21-23). Here Paul is talking about the various idol statues manufactured by the heathen world. These are the great art treasures of antiquity, statues of Zeus, Athena, Venus de Milo - heathen Greek and Roman idols, the images of corruptible men. "And to birds," the ibis in Egypt; "and fourfooted beasts," bulls, jackals and other animals; "and creeping things," even snakes and bugs (the scarab beetle). The heathen world took this glorious God whom they knew, this God of "eternal power and Godhead" (1:20), and changed that glory of God into images which they knew were not gods. Strictly speaking, they saw the statue as the dwelling place of the god whom they worshiped; but the statue finally came to be identified with the god in their minds. This was the ungodliness of the world of Paul's time.

Now comes a transitional sentence: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (1:24). What he means by this is explained in detail after verse 25. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (1:25). They changed the truth about God into a lie. Why would Paul say this? Well, they said that Zeus was god, Athena was god, Baal was god, and Ashtoreth was god; but all these gods weren't gods at all. Every time that they spoke of these idols as being gods they were lying. Or we can personify the idol - he pretends to be a god when he isn't. This statue, or the person supposedly represented by the statue, claims to be a god, but isn't, and so is lying. The O.T. speaks of the heathen idols as "lying vanities" (Psalm 31:6). They are vain, empty. But these good-for-nothing things claim that they are god, so they are "lying vanities." The heathen take this truth about God which they have learned from nature, but which they have suppressed, and twist it, and make a god out of something else. This is "changing the truth of God into a lie" (1:25).

Verse 25 corresponds to everything that Paul has said in 1:19-23 about the ungodliness of the heathen world. Verse 24, on the other hand, is a summary of everything that Paul is going to say in 1:26-32 about the unrighteousness of the heathen world. This is what we call a chiasmic arrangement, or a chiasm. You have this construction quite commonly in literature. When you draw lines to represent the relationship of the four sections here, you draw the letter X, which is really the Greek letter Chi. That's where you get this term, chiasm.

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts..." (1:24). This is echoed in verse 26, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections...". Then look at verse 28 where you have the same expression: "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." This is a rather difficult thought for some people because it says that God gave them over to this sort of life. So they ask, "How can you say that God gave them over to this corrupt, evil way of living if God doesn't want that kind of thing? If God wants all people to be holy (Romans 12:1), how can Paul say three times that God gave these people over to such corruption?" There's no question that this is what happened, because this is exactly what Paul says. When we have questions like this, we should remember that our idea of a right or wrong action has to be guided by the Scriptures - we can't do it the other way around. God gave those people up to that kind of life. But if you think about it, I'm sure that this is not going to be as difficult as it seems to be at first glance.

Sometimes it happens that a man will pursue a course of behavior which he knows is wrong. He acts against better knowledge, and finally ends up becoming a slave to this act. He is "given over" to it. Drunkenness is a good example. Getting drunk might be a once-in-awhile thing, but if it continues the result can be alcoholism - a person being a slave of this sin. When men insist on having their own way, there comes a time when God finally says, "Okay, have it your way." It might have happened to you when you were younger, that your folks didn't want you to do something. But you pestered the life out of them: "Why can't I? All the other kids are doing it?" Did it ever happen that your father said, "Go ahead then, I don't care"? How did you feel about that? What did he actually mean? Perhaps then you lost your desire to do whatever it was. That was my experience. It's a shaking experience, in a way, when finally your father says, "You know that I don't want you to do this, but go ahead anyway." It's almost like saying, "I wash my hands of you."

In a similar fashion God finally says to people, "If you want it that way, go ahead and have it that way. I'm done with you." Then sin becomes its own punishment. The drunkard who is finally given over to his drunkenness hates this thing. Always there comes this remorse; and yet, when he's sobered up, the first thing he thinks about is getting that drink. He has been given over to it. In this way God finally says to the world, "All right, have it your way. Go and live the way you please. God gives the world over to its sins. They don't want to recognize God's authority

over them. They don't want to honor God as they should. They insist on changing the truth of God into a lie (1:25). So God finally says, "If you're not going to worship me, I will give you over to this depravity." Paul describes this in plain terms.

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet"(1:26,27). The sin that Paul describes here is homosexuality, which was a very common sin in the ancient world. It's becoming a common sin in our time again. When I was a youngster this was a word that we didn't even know. I don't think I had ever heard the word homosexuality until I was in my middle twenties - and I certainly didn't live a sheltered life. It was such a shameful thing that people didn't even speak of it - you certainly would never have found it in the newspaper. Just think of the tremendous change that has come over our country in our lifetime. Now homosexuality is such a public offense that people boast of it.

In the heathen world it was a common thing. Some of the greatest love poems in Greek literature were written by Sappho for her female students. Later writers accused her of immorality. Since Sappho lived on the Isle of Lesbos, we speak of female homosexuality as lesbianism. When Plato (428 - 347 B.C.), the Greek philosopher, talked about the love of beauty, he started out by discussing the love of beautiful boys. These Greek philosophers thought of homosexuality as a pretty normal thing. They were ashamed of the love that they had for their wives; it was beneath a man's dignity to talk about that. But the love of beautiful boys was perfectly respectable. It was a rotten world, completely depraved and immoral, a world which had lost all sense of shame. This is the world which Paul describes here as being the very bottom of the ladder. This is what happens to people who become subject to the ungodliness which is described in the previous verses. Paul paints a picture of moral rottenness.

It's a real tragedy that this sort of thing is becoming a part of American life, so that even preachers are calling for a different attitude toward the homosexual, as though this weren't something that is a moral disgrace, but a psychological quirk. Of course this is true, it is a psychological quirk; but it is also a moral disgrace. Years ago when Alcoholics Anonymous started out, the one big song that they sang all the time was that drunkenness was not a sin, but a disease. I don't doubt that alcoholism is a disease, but it is also a sin. These are not antithetical ideas. So also homosexuality is a mental disease, but it is also a sin. It is the corruption that follows upon the failure to give God the glory and honor to which he is entitled. Paul describes this sin in great detail here. Then he goes on to other sins.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (1:28); they act improperly. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (1:29-31). There isn't one of these sins that we could leave out of a list of our modern sins.

"Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (1:32). The heathen that are guilty of all these sins know that there is an omnipotent God, and they know that people who do the things of which they are guilty are worthy of death. They know the judgment of God. They have a moral sense from God which convinces them that they will be punished for doing these things, but they still do them. They even find pleasure in seeing other people do them. There are a lot of people in our world like this. Maybe they don't quite have the nerve to do some of these things themselves, but they sure do enjoy reading about it.

There are a lot of adulterers who commit adultery vicariously, by delighting in the adultery of other people. That is the uncomfortable feeling that I have when I see people reading many of the magazines on our newsstands. I once picked up a copy of Confidential Magazine when I was in downtown Chicago. Do you remember Confidential? It was sued for libel and is out of business now - at least I hope it's out of business. It's probably replaced by something just as bad, or worse. Anyway, when this magazine was in the news I saw a copy for sale on State Street, and on the spur of the moment I bought it. I wanted to know just what kind of a thing it was. I got on the elevated train and started reading it. I got through the first paragraph of the first story and I was mighty uncomfortable. I turned the page and started reading the next story, and by this time I was awfully embarrassed for even having the magazine in my hand. So I shoved it under some other stuff that I had, and took it home. There I put it under a whole stack of papers that I had on my desk so that the kids wouldn't find it. Then I started studying, but I just couldn't rest because this lousy magazine was on my desk. I thought, "What if I would die, and someone would find this?" It was dark by this time, so I took the thing out and threw it in the garbage can. I thought, "That's where it belongs!" I went back to study, but I still couldn't rest because I thought, "The garbage men are going to find it in the garbage can of one of the professors at the college." So I went out with a flashlight, hauled it out, and threw it into the fire in the basement. Then, finally, I was at ease again. It was just that vile and rotten, telling about all the depravity of prominent people. Whether or not it's true, it's just plain unadulterated garbage.

A lot of people will say, "You have to find out how people live." Well, that's like finding out what people had to eat by going to the alley and lifting off the cover from every garbage can. There are a lot of people who get a kick out of reading that stuff. They sin vicariously. Robert Burns (1759-1796) wrote about some of these sinners in "Tam o'Shanter." Tam o'Shanter has been denied entrance into heaven, so he comes to the gates of hell and just begs the devil to let him in, because it's awfully cold in outer space. The devil says, "I don't have room for people like you down here." The devil points to a bunch of souls frying on a griddle and says, "Souls like that are a dime a dozen down here. They're always weeping that they've been too small to sin to the heights of their desires." Well I think that there are a lot of people like that. They avoid great sins, not because they are particularly opposed to doing these things, or because it is contrary to God's will, but because "honesty is the best policy." You don't want to be disgraced in the community. What do you do then? You just buy yourself a magazine and sit down and enjoy the sin vicariously. Such are the people who "not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (1:32).

(Q.) Can you say the same about the movies and television? (A.) Very often, yes.  
 (Q.) How is a pastor or teacher to handle this with children? (A.) I don't mean to say that you can't read about adultery; you'd have to throw away your newspaper. The important thing is how you read about or view these things. Do you take pleasure in them, or are you repelled by them? A lawyer, perhaps, who had to read Confidential Magazine to prepare for a case, could do it to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Do you find pleasure in wickedness, or not? I think we ought to be careful what movie we go to see. Somebody said, "Go and see 'Tom Jones,'" so I saw it, and was awfully uncomfortable because it was just filth for filth's sake. But this was the way the story was told. Tom Jones (1749) was a reading assignment in college - on the screen it was altogether different. We have to watch ourselves. Something may be a sin and something else may not be a sin, only offensive to someone's Victorian taste.

I enjoy cowboy movies. There is a lot of sinning going on in a western movie. When it comes to breaking God's Law, there's no difference between adultery and murder is there? I thought that "High Noon" was a marvelous movie, yet there is murder in it. What I enjoy about a western is the scenery and the horses, not the murder in it. We should be careful, too, about giving offense. When I was a pastor in Iowa, we had a pass to attend the movies any time - we went a couple times a year while I was there.

Watching a boxing match in which the purpose of one man is to knock the other man out always strikes me as being bloodthirsty. Boxing can be a fine sport, but put on decent gloves! I don't think that there is any justification for knocking the other person senseless.

(Q.) How can you use the natural knowledge of God in doing mission work? (A.) This is your point of contact with the heathen. They "know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death" (1:32). When you preach the law to these people, telling them that they're going to hell, they know that already. You're bringing this knowledge to the surface so that they will face it. They all suppress it otherwise. The minute a fellow starts thinking about the swiftness of life, especially on New Year's Eve, what does he do? He goes out and drowns all these thoughts in drink and a lot of loud noise. I think that the psychology behind this is that people realize that their life is passing away very quickly.

Your job as a Christian minister is to make people stop and face up to what they already know. If you start talking about the gospel and so on, this is completely foreign to them. But thoughts of hell and damnation and the judgment of God are already there. When you make people face up to them you strike a responsive chord in their hearts. You are preparing them for the preaching of the gospel. Unless a person has been brought face to face with damnation in such a way that he's scared, he's not going to see much need for forgiveness and the work of Christ. There is an axiom in education that says that you proceed from the known to the unknown; you build on what people already know. This is true of Christian education and mission work.

When you go out to preach to the heathen about God, you don't have to explain to them who God is. Did you ever try to explain to a youngster in Sunday School who God is and where God is? These are the hard questions. We don't always have to answer these questions because when you just tell people about God you strike a responsive chord in their hearts. They know his Godhead (1:20, page 19), what deity means. They gain this knowledge from the created world.

## ROMANS 2

Chapter 2 turns to another group of people. Up to now Paul has been talking about "them." "They" do these things. It's clear that Paul has been talking about those "outside the pale," the heathen world. Now, suddenly, Paul uses the pronoun "you" in this chapter. "Behold, thou art called a Jew ..." (2:17) he says. So here Paul turns his attention to those who do know the true God, who are not guilty of the gross idolatry which he described in chapter 1. The Jews generally weren't as immoral, godless and unrighteous as the heathen world. Compared to the heathen, the Jews were paragons of virtue. The great contrast between the heathen world and the Jewish world was typified by one of the Greek historians who said, "The Jews are a strange people; they raise all their children." Now just think of what this remark means. It's just like keeping alive all the dogs and cats that are born. "They don't saw their kids up in sacks and throw them into the lake. They're strange people." In the Greek world, it was perfectly respectable, if you had more children than you wanted, to take them out to the city dump. That was it. There were people who went around collecting them and making slaves of them. The exposure of babies was a common practice. The Jews weren't guilty of this.

The Jews generally didn't live the same kind of idolatrous and adulterous life as the heathen did. When they committed adultery they tried to remain respectable. They divorced their wives first, and then married someone else. Just as today, a lot of people are very careful. As Alexander King said: "I never committed adultery in my life, except once, while I was married to another woman. And I married that girl afterwards, so everything turned out all right." What a wonderful fellow - he got a divorce first before he started running around with another woman.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (2:1). The Jews were pretty careful to maintain a decent moral facade, so they would have said, "No, sir! Not us!" in reply to what Paul says about them here. We see what Paul has in mind later in this chapter (2:21-23). "Aren't you doing what you're telling other people not to do? Though you judge the heathen world to be guilty, I'm here to tell you that you are guilty of exactly the same things. Maybe not in the same gross, open way - but finally you're going to have to plead guilty; and I'm going to prove it to you." This Paul does before the end of the chapter. He asks some very incisive questions, and he quotes the Scriptures to them to show that they are just as bad as the heathen, "all under sin" (Romans 3:9).

This passage (2:1) is often quoted by people to prove that you (a Christian) are not supposed to judge the rest of the world. When people say that the Bible says we are not to judge anyone, you can be sure that they are quoting out of context, because this is not what the Bible says. They ask, "Doesn't the Bible say, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'" (Matthew 7:1)? Sure it says that, but read the rest of it. This statement is followed by the parable of the mote and the beam (Matthew 7:3-5). What does Jesus say you should do after you pull the beam out of your own eye? You should pull the mote out of your brother's eye. This is what Christ is condemning, that you judge other people uncharitably, in an unloving way, without at the same time judging yourself. You should be concerned about the spiritual welfare of your neighbor, not just finding fault with him. If I'm going to pull the mote out of my brother's eye, I'm going to have to judge the difference between an eye and a mote. Paul isn't saying here (2:1), "You are inexcusable because you judge these people." No, he says, "You are inexcusable because you judge them and don't realize that in judging them you are condemning yourself, since you do the same things."

If you say that no one should judge, that means that no one should ever say that anyone else has committed a sin. Suppose that a man robs a bank, and he is brought under church discipline. The pastor is told, "We have this brother who robbed a bank, and he refuses to admit that this is wrong. We're convinced that this man ought to be excommunicated for his own good." But the pastor says, "Who are we to judge? Maybe he had his reason for doing it. Let's put the best construction on this." You see how ridiculous this would be. If a man has robbed a bank, he's guilty of sin; he is judged by the Law of God. I'm not going to put the best construction on this and say that he made a withdrawal! He's a criminal, and if I say anything else but that about him I'm lying. I'll have to call him the sinner that he is - yet always remembering, "There, but by the grace of God, go I." I must judge with a charitable heart, with concern for the man's soul, but judge I must - "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). At the same time, I ought to judge myself, since I too have violated God's commandments.

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (2:2). The judgment of God is always right. The judgment of man, based on outward appearance, is often wrong. The Jewish people were generally thought of as being morally decent, avoiding many of the gross sins of which the Gentile world was guilty. They were also self-righteous. The Pharisees especially were intent upon obeying the Law of God and living a perfect life. So often when we hear about the Pharisees in the N.T. we think only of people who were very evil; but they were the most respectable people in town. These are the people to whom Paul speaks when he says, "You are without excuse" (2:1), even as the Gentiles are without excuse (1:20). The judgment of God, which is "according to truth" (2:2) condemns you too. The judgment of God is never mistaken. This we too must take to heart. We can fool the rest of the world by appearing to be perfectly respectable people. We're not guilty of gross violations of the Law of God; we don't steal, rob banks, or commit adultery. But the judgment of God which is pronounced on us, and which says that all men are sinners (3:23), is a judgment that is always "according to truth" (2:2).

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (2:3). There really isn't much to say here. The answer to the question is certainly very evident, very plain.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (2:4). "The goodness of God" here is not the goodness that God has, according to which God is good himself, but the goodness that comes from God. This is the goodness that God bestows on us. So the "of God" would be a genitive of source. This goodness that comes from God leads you to repentance. Ordinarily we think of people repenting when badness comes from God, when God sends sickness or trouble. We talk about people repenting on their death bed, when they are reminded of their sins and begin to confess them. But Paul has an entirely different thing in mind here when he says that the goodness which God shows you should make you repent of your sins. A good illustration of this is found in the story of the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke 5:4-11). I often wondered in my younger years why Peter fell down on his knees before Jesus there and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." You would think that Peter would say, "Lord, you go fishing with us again." I think that this story is a marvelous commentary on the goodness of God leading men to repentance. If you remember your childhood when you knew you had been naughty, and your parents still gave you a fine Christmas present or birthday present, then you remembered your guilt.

I remember a time in my life when I learned what it means that the goodness of God leads you to repentance. When I was a pastor in Iowa I had a call to a neighboring congregation in a city which I had always thought would be a nice place to live. My salary was a little over \$100.00 a month in this little mission congregation, and taking the call would have meant a \$50.00 a month raise. When this call came I started smoking again - I had quit for three years - because I was tempted mightily to go. From the very beginning, however, I had the feeling that I just couldn't leave this mission congregation which had just had two pastors. The former pastor had been there for four years, and I had been there for three years at the time. So finally I decided to send this call back, and I felt real good about it. I didn't have any qualms about patting myself on the back for this because I thought that I had done a wonderful thing for the kingdom and for the Lord by staying in the mission congregation. I didn't say anything to anybody about it, but I felt proud of myself.

Well, right after that I went on my vacation, and when we came back after two weeks the first Sunday in church I was making announcements at the end of the service and the chairman of the congregation stood up in the side aisle. I can see him standing up to this day. I was kind of disgusted with him and thought to myself, "Why in the world doesn't he stay seated until I'm finished with my announcements?" I thought he was getting up to walk out. So when I started walking out he started toward the front and said, "Just a minute, Reverend, I have something to say to you." So I went back, and he said, "We got to talking while you were on vacation, and we felt that we ought to do something to show our appreciation for your staying with us. So we got together and collected a little downpayment for a new car." I thanked the congregation, thinking a little downpayment would be about \$100 to \$150, pretty good for those days. I stuck the envelope in my pocket and walked to the door to shake hands. Then I forgot all about the envelope because there were a couple of mission prospects there whose names I got after services. Then I walked home; the house was about a block away. I was just hanging my coat in the closet when I remembered the envelope. So I pulled it out, and here it was, \$660.00 - which just figured out to \$50.00 a month for a year, plus the tithe on this. That was one time when I felt awfully bad about a wonderful thing happening to me. I thought of how proud I had been about making such a wonderful sacrifice; you realize how selfrighteous you can get at times. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (2:4).

When God is so good to us, when he showers these riches on us every day, it ought to remind us of our sins. It doesn't do that very often, right? But just

think how good God is to us when we don't deserve it. Have you ever felt bad when someone against whom you had some bad feelings or about whom you had said something nasty walked up and greeted you in a warm and friendly way? You begin to realize what Paul means when he says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (2:4). I think it would be a wonderful thing if we would remind our people of this too. So often we just see the other side of it - expecting people to repent when things go badly. But just think of how well things are going for us these days in America. Instead of complaining because things aren't better, we ought to be really surprised at how well things go for us, when we deserve the punishment of God every day.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering" (2:4). Here Paul says, "You deserve God's punishment, but he is holding back. Things are going pretty well for you because God is longsuffering, not taking vengeance on you. And you don't know that during all this time of God's blessing he is calling you to repent of your sins." Instead of repenting, "after thy hardness and impenitent heart (thou) treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (2:5). "The day of wrath" is the day of judgment, "the righteous judgment of God." It is the day when it will be revealed to all how right the judgment of God is.

When we look at the world the judgment of God often appears to be unrighteous. The world doesn't appear to be run in the right way. When I taught this course at River Forest I always referred here to Tony Accardo's house, which stood just a few blocks from the college campus. The most beautiful, elaborate and expensive house in town was the home of Tony Accardo, head of the crime syndicate in Chicago. This doesn't seem right to us. "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Psalm 73:3). Job asked, "Why do the wicked people get ahead in the world?" (Job 21:7-15). The poorest houses in town were the professors' houses on the campus, and these were the Lord's servants. They were still pretty fine houses, but not like Tony Accardo's. He had goldplated faucets in the bath tub; the tub was carved out of one solid piece of onyx. When he had parties for the members of the syndicate in town the policemen patrolled the grounds for him. This man deserved to be in jail, but he boasted that he hadn't spent a night in jail yet. When he was arrested his lawyers got him out the same day. Does God run the world in the right way when men like Tony Accardo prosper like this? Many a teacher and pastor has to worry about paying his bills. This problem has troubled God's people from Bible times to the present.

What about the godless evil of the communists in Russia, Castro's Cuba, or China, where they are wiping out the Christian Church? These are the enemies of God, the most powerful people on earth. Of course, we can't say that Americans are so wonderful either. Who gets ahead in American politics - the man of principle or the man who compromises the truth? I can remember my uncle shaking his finger in my father's face - my father was always in politics on a township or county level - saying, "Du kannst nicht ein township office halten, als du bist ein Schuft!" - You can't even hold a township office without being a rascal." This is often true; the judgment of God doesn't appear to be righteous. But "the day of wrath" will be the day of the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (2:5). On that day, when people see how right God is, God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (2:6).

But look again at 2:5. "After thy hardness and impenitent heart (thou) treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath..." One sin ought to produce one "wrath" on God's part; if you commit another sin there ought to be another "wrath." That's what would happen if God's judgments were immediately revealed as righteous. If a man sinned, God would "spank" him right away. But this fellow, the sinner, is getting along very well; he's not being "spanked." The goodness of God is leading him to repentance (2:4) but he doesn't see this. He is "treasuring up wrath," just as surely as a man puts money in the bank. When "the day of wrath" comes, when the "righteous judgment of God" is revealed, when the sinner's good days end, then it will be apparent that God does punish these sins.



On this day of the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (2:5), God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (2:6). We shouldn't try to explain this away. This is a plain, simple statement of Scripture. A lot of people say, "Of course, that isn't true anymore. God will not 'render to every man according to his deeds.' God will judge according to the gospel. Just ignore this passage." This is not what we ought to do. So often people have the notion that the preaching of the gospel just shoves the law out the window, so that it doesn't count anymore. But it's still true; Paul says it. On judgment day God "will render to every man according to his deeds." This is simply a statement of the law. But someone asks, "How can anyone be saved, if God will judge us for every evil deed?" Our deeds certainly don't deserve a verdict of not guilty. We deserve punishment - even for the best things that we have done (Isaiah 64:6). How is there any hope for us? There isn't supposed to be any hope for you in chapter 2 - the hope is coming in chapters 3 - 5. Here Paul just says, "God will give you what you have coming." Then Paul explains in detail what he means.

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality (he will render) eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness (he will render) indignation and wrath. (He will render) tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but (he will render) glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (2:7-10). You see how these four verses are a commentary on verse 6. This is pure law; there is no gospel here. Paul just says, "If you do right, you're going to heaven; if you do wrong, you're going to hell." And according to this all of us would deserve to go to hell. There is no hope for any of us according to this principle.

But Paul in chapters 3 - 5 will show how Christ has come and obeyed the commandments for us. Christ was so totally the substitute for us that everything he has done we have done. On Judgment Day, if God asks me, "Did you keep the commandments?" I'll say, "Yes." And he'll say, "Weren't you a sinner? Didn't you fail to give me the glory and honor to which I am entitled?" I will say, "Yes." "But you just said that you kept the commandments?" "Yes, by pleading the merits of Christ. Christ kept the commandments for me. Those deeds of his are mine, and I claim them, by faith." By his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which he believes that Christ has kept all the commandments for him a Christian can say, "I have kept all the commandments. Go ahead, Lord, render to me according to my deeds."

This is how you get relief from the law - not by pushing the law aside and saying that it doesn't count anymore. Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Paul will come back to this again: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (3:31). So you don't want to weaken this in any way. The gospel does not set aside the fact that God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (2:6). You ought to believe that God will do this. The Bible says this, and you should not see the point of these passages. Luther says that you shouldn't carpenter around on God's Word. The Bible means just exactly what it says, that those who are evil are going to be damned. And only those who "by patient continuance in well doing" do what is right will be saved (1:7). And the only way that I have a claim to this everlasting life is through the Lord Jesus, who did these things for us. He is my substitute.

"For there is no respect of persons with God" (2:11). Jew and Gentile are judged equally by God. In fact, if anybody is going to be judged more severely, it is going to be the Jew. The Jews always expected that God was going to treat them as favored people. No; when it comes to punishment, the Jew is going to be punished first, then the Gentile. God's blessing of salvation came first to the Jews. The most honored people in heaven will be Jews. Abraham is such a great man in heaven that heaven is called "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). Paul was a Jew; Peter was a Jew. The great-

est of all God's saints are these Jewish saints. But by the same token, when God hands out punishment, he starts with the Jews, the people who have been most richly blessed. "There is no respect of persons with God" (2:11). The Greek word really means that there is "no receiving of faces." God doesn't look at a man's face when he judges to see if he's a Jew or a Gentile. When it comes to punishing, everyone who has it coming is going to get it. When it comes to salvation, everyone to whom that salvation is due will get it, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile. "God shows no partiality" is Goodspeed's very fine translation for this verse.

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (2:12). Those who sinned without the law are the Gentiles who don't have the Law of God given through Moses. Those who sinned in the law are the Jews who lived in an atmosphere in which the Law of God held sway. In that sense they sinned "in the law." For Paul, "the law" is the Law given through Moses. Thus the Gentiles which have the law "written in their hearts" (2:15) are "without law" and will "perish without (the) law" (2:12). Jesus said, "That servant, which knew his lord's will ... shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not ... shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12:47,48). This is the one distinction that the Lord makes in the punishment of sinners. The sinner who knows what is right but does what is wrong will be punished more severely than the sinner who does not know the full truth of God, who has never been taught the commandments. Paul will show in 2:13,14 that no one is without the law, though for the heathen it is only the law written in his heart. The heathen do not have the same full understanding of right and wrong that a Christian has. The law written in their hearts may not condemn things which the Law written in the Bible says are wrong. So this verse would strike especially at the Jew and remind him of the greater punishment that comes to him for sinning "in the law" while the Gentile sins "without law."

"(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (2:13). You notice that 2:13 starts with a parenthesis which goes through 2:15. The King James translators wanted you to read verses 12 and 16 together - this would make a sensible translation in English. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (2:12,16). However, long parentheses like 2:13-15 are pretty rare in Greek. It's not normal. Greek has no punctuation marks at all, so in Greek word order is extremely important. Sentences interrupted by such a long parenthesis interrupting the Greek word order are very rare. It would be far better if you would just drop the parenthesis entirely and read the verses in order. "(They) shall be judged by the law: for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (2:12,13).

Here we have two expressions which you ought to look at very closely for an understanding of Romans. The first one is the phrase, "just before God" (2:13). When we talked about the righteousness of God (1:17) I told you that in Greek the word "righteousness" has exactly the same letters to begin with as the word "righteous" or "just" or "to justify." These are all from the same word. We know that the "righteousness of God" can be either the righteousness which God has or it can be a righteousness which God gives to others. Here you have the first clear clue to what Paul means when he speaks of the righteousness of God. He talks about "the doers of the law" being "just before God." Another possible translation would be, "The doers of the law are righteous before God." So the righteousness of God is this righteousness according to which I am righteous in the sight of God. That's what caused Luther to say, finally, "This righteousness of God is a righteousness which we have before God."

The second word that you should look at carefully is "justify." Here Paul is talking about people being justified on "the day of wrath," (2:5), the day of judgment, when all men will stand before the judgment throne of God (Matthew 25:31-46).

Paul says that on that day "the doers of the law shall be justified" (2:13). The Roman Catholic Church says that "justify" means "to make righteous," to reform a sinner, to make a good man out of a bad man. The Lutheran Church has always insisted that the basic meaning of "justify" is "to declare righteous." Here you have a passage to help you decide which one of the two must be right. "The doers of the law shall be justified" - can that possibly mean that on Judgment Day (2:5,16) the doers of the law shall be reformed, made good? Or does it mean that on that day those people who have kept all the commandments will be declared righteous by God? I don't think that there is any question as to what the answer has to be. The "doer of the law" is a person who is already righteous; he doesn't have to be made righteous. This righteous person comes to the judgment as a good man, as a "doer of the law," not as a person who has to be taken by God and made over into a good man. (Review the dialogue under 2:7-10). Just as in an earthly court the doer of the law is to be pronounced not guilty, so, before the court of God, the doer of the law is to be declared not guilty, but "just," righteous. The Lutheran definition of "to declare righteous" is the only definition that fits the context.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (2:14-16). That's your sentence there. Lenski suggests that you translate "in the day" with the phrase, "in connection with the day." That's not bad; it is in connection with the day of judgment that a man's conscience condemns him (2:15). In your own experience, when did your conscience trouble you? What was it that worried you? Wasn't it the day of judgment? "God is going to punish me for this."

I remember when I was just a mite of a child I lied to my mother, and I carried that on my conscience for years. Somehow I had gotten the idea, when I was a boy, that a lie was a terrible sin. But it could be forgiven - unless you said, "Ganz gewisz." If my mother doubted our word, she had the habit of asking us, "Ganz gewisz?" This is about the same as saying in English, "Honor bright?" "Ganz gewisz? Is that really true, completely true?" And then we'd always say, "No." We always confessed that we hadn't been telling the truth. But one day I got into a fight with my sister and pulled her hair. She started to cry, and I knew that I was going to get a spanking for it. So I quick bit myself on the arm. Then when my mother asked, "Did you pull her hair?" I said, "Yes - but look what she did to me!" I guess she didn't have any teeth, or her teeth didn't fit the marks. I don't know how my mother knew it, but she did. So she asked, "Ganz gewisz?" And I said, "Yes." And then I got a spanking. I never forgot that for years - not the spanking so much, but the fact that I had committed a sin that couldn't be forgiven. I had lied a second time to my mother. And I was thinking what would happen to me on the day of judgment. If you think of these things in such concrete terms you'll know what Paul means when he says, "their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another in (relation to) the day (of judgment) when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (2:15,16).

This phrase, "according to my gospel," doesn't mean that God will judge us "according to my gospel." Dr. Koehler in his Summary quotes this passage to prove that God will judge according to the gospel on judgment day, and not according to the law. I'm sure that this isn't what Paul means. "My gospel" is "my preaching," the sum total of Paul's preaching. It's like Matthew's Gospel, which is everything that Matthew wrote in the first book of the N.T., not just the gospel in the strict sense of the word. The Gospel according to St. Matthew has a lot of law in it too. In preaching his gospel, Paul says some of the same things that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John said. He says that the Lord Jesus who came to save all men will come again to "judge the quick and the dead." Matthew's Gospel tells us that at the end of the

world everyone will appear before the Savior for judgment; and he's going to send some of those people to hell (Matthew 25:31-46). Paul's gospel tells the same thing that Jesus will "judge the secrets of men" (2:16). A Christian who knows Jesus Christ as his Savior is not terrified by this if he keeps in mind what he knows by faith. It becomes part of the gospel for him, because the gospel tells him that on the day of judgment he will be pronounced innocent for Jesus' sake. But for the unbeliever this is a terrifying thought that God will "judge the secrets of men." These are the "secrets" that you can cover up before the world, that society doesn't know about, the wickedness of our heart of which we are ashamed. These "secrets" of men will be judged by God on the last day "as my gospel says." Compare this with Paul's saying that Christ "rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4). As the scriptures said he would rise from the dead, so he did rise from the dead. As Paul's gospel included the warning that God will judge the secrets of men, so it will be. This is how I understand this last phrase.

(Q.) How do we understand John 3:18? "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It seems that God is judging according to the gospel, and that the only thing that damns you is unbelief. Yet Paul says that God will judge according to the law (2:12; 3:19). How do the two go together? (A.) This is one of the difficult questions. It is really a problem in the proper distinction between the law and the gospel. It is true that every sin will be punished, and it is also true that God forgives every sin (1:18, 3:23-26). I have to believe both statements because both are in the Bible. Human reason says that this is impossible because if you believe one you can't believe the other. I think that when you see something like this you understand what Luther meant when he said, "Law and gospel are more contradictory than contradiction."

When people talk about contradictions in the Bible I wish they'd pick on these rather than all the little tripe that they dig out - like one angel at Jesus' grave (Matthew 28:2), or two angels (John 20:12), as if that were a terrible contradiction. If there were two angels at the tomb there was one. If one evangelist says that there were two, and the other evangelist says that there was one who spoke to the women, that doesn't bother me one bit.

But here we have a contradiction between these law and gospel statements. If you read both you have to believe both. How? You can believe both only when you operate with the cross. The only way that I can possibly believe both statements in God's Word is by believing that in Christ God has already punished every sin. When Jesus died on the cross he died for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16). On the other hand, because of what Christ did there every sin is cancelled. It is by believing this that you put yourself under the Word of God. The same Bible also says that if people do not believe this they will be damned (Mark 16:16). It's hard for us to make reasonable sense out of this. How can God have forgiven every sin and still condemn some people to hell? People object to this, saying that you have to be a Universalist if you believe that God has forgiven every sin. You don't have to be a Universalist. My everlasting life consists in believing just this gospel. And whoever doesn't believe it "is condemned already" (John 3:18). Right now he is judged; and he lives in that same state that will bring him nothing but eternal misery. The misery of hell consists in this, that you don't know that God loves you or that God has forgiven you. That's the unbelief that will be made manifest on the last day. The unbeliever still doesn't really know what his unbelief amounts to because the righteous judgment of God is still not manifest (2:5). But when in eternity he lives forever without the assurance of God's forgiveness, then he will walk no longer in unbelief, but by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). He will see this punishment; God will reveal it. But now God holds back with this punishment in order that the goodness of God might lead him to repentance (2:4).

(Q.) What about the sin against the Holy Ghost? (A.) Of course, that's another question. This is how I speak about the sin against the Holy Ghost. Let this big circle represent unbelief, the unbelief of a man who doesn't know God's truth. Let this smaller circle inside represent the people who harden their hearts against the gospel which is proclaimed to them in all its clarity, but they still refuse to listen. That's a worse kind of unbelief. This smallest circle inside is the sin against the Holy Ghost, the worst unbelief of all, an unbelief that's so brazen and stubborn that any kind of repentance becomes impossible. But all three categories represent unbelievers. The sin against the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:31,32) is pure law. There is no gospel whatever in the passages that deal with this sin.

You realize that it is not only the sin against the Holy Ghost which will not be forgiven. "...He is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Joshua 24:19). Is that the sin against the Holy Ghost? No. Nahum 1:2,3 says, "...The Lord ... reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked..." The original doesn't have "the wicked," but of course they are spoken of here. "Not acquit" means that the Lord will condemn them. He will not declare them free from guilt; he will not justify. "God will not at all justify" means that he will not at all forgive. But these are all law passages. Some of the strongest law passages are those which speak about the sin against the Holy Ghost. Just as unbelief shuts a man out from forgiveness, so the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is a type of unbelief, shuts a man out from forgiveness. In this sin a man lives throughout eternity as an unforgiven sinner in his own conscience. His sin is never forgiven in the sense that he never has forgiveness, because the only way that you can have forgiveness is by faith.

That often seems so complicated to us; but let's think of this again in concrete terms. Let's say that you say something real nasty to me this evening. You become angry at something that I say in class, and you answer back in a vicious way. So we walk out of this classroom tonight and I forget all about this; I forgive you. I'm not going to hold a grudge at someone's loss of temper. Meanwhile, at home, you begin to think that what you said wasn't right. So you're troubled. It may even keep you awake for a couple hours tonight. By tomorrow, maybe, you have forgotten it. But when you see me next Tuesday it all comes back again. And if you were taking this course for credit it would be still worse, wouldn't it? Because Judgment Day is coming at the end of the semester. So the more you see of me the worse you feel. But I have forgiven you, haven't I? In your own mind, however, you are unforgiven. Why? First of all, because you don't know that I forgave you. But some day you come to me and say, "Look, I'm sorry for what I said the other day in class." "That's all right. What did you say? I don't remember this." "I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). Now if you believe me when I say this, that straightens things out. But suppose you think, "He's just pretending - until Judgment Day comes. Then he's going to get even." You see, not only do you have to know about forgiveness to feel at ease in your heart; you also have to believe it.

In that same way God forgives every sin. He tells us that these sins are forgiven. But if we don't believe this its not going to bring us any joy, the joy of heaven, having everlasting life, living in the forgiveness of sins. When you live in this assurance that God loves you, that nothing will separate you from his love (Romans 8:35), that on Judgment Day he is going to take you to heaven, then you already have the same joy that you're going to have in heaven. Then we'll start walking by sight and no longer by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). Here we are troubled by our lack of faith; we aren't as happy and confident as we should be because of the weakness of our faith. With a proper faith, we'd never have another moment of sorrow here.

If "all things" really "work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28), shouldn't you rejoice over everything that happens to you, that it will be for your good? And if God is going to give you far greater glory (2 Corinthians 4:17)

shouldn't that make it possible for you to meet every loss, every pain, every evil with equanimity, confidence and good cheer? Even the "bad" in life is just another evidence of God's love. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Hebrews 12:6). If we really believe these things as we should believe them, we would be a completely care-free and confident people. But our trouble is that we don't have the kind of faith we should have, and so we live in doubt and fear. Then you slide off finally into unbelief. When someone gets into unbelief, the result is that he has to live in such fear that he refuses to face up to it; he tells himself, finally, that there is no God. That's the only way he can get rid of the awful burden upon his heart. As Huxley said, "It's amazing what a weight is lifted from a man's heart when he convinces himself that there is no God."

"(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (2:13,14). "Gentiles" here are non-Jews, the heathen, who don't have the Law of Moses the Ten Commandments. Yet they do "things contained in the law." The Chinese were known for centuries all over the world as a people who had a high regard for their parents and elders. No Chinese son would think of deserting his aged parents, of telling them to shift for themselves. This was simply taken for granted among these people. They had never, perhaps, heard of the Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:12), but they were still conscious of their duty toward their parents. Children everywhere in the world know that they should honor their parents. When they don't honor their parents, they know that they have done wrong.

Among the Gentiles, the heathen in Africa, in some places it's safer to let your possessions lie around loose than it is in the city of Milwaukee. People have talked about this, what a strange thing it is, that you can let your things lie out in the open and nobody touches them. These people who didn't know the Seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:15) could pick up everything that was loose, but they didn't. So the Gentiles still demonstrate that they "do by nature the things contained in the law."

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" (2:15). We say so often that the law is written in men's hearts, and there is nothing wrong with this - we all know what we mean by it. But the Bible actually says here that "the work of the law" is written in men's hearts. "The work of the law" is the work that the law does. The work that the law does is this work of making known to men what is right and what is wrong. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). You see, "the work of the law" is to bring men to "the knowledge of sin," a knowledge of right and wrong, a consciousness of their own wrongness. So what the law does for the Jew, showing him what is right and wrong, it also does for the Gentile. "The work of the law," a consciousness of sin, is written in the hearts of people.

"...their conscience also bearing witness" (2:15). Paul clearly distinguishes here between "the work of the law" which is "written in their hearts" and conscience. Conscience is not the knowledge of right and wrong; conscience is something else. Conscience is expressed in people's "thoughts ... accusing or else excusing one another." Conscience bears witness to the existence of "the work of the law written in (the) hearts" of people. It is important to distinguish sharply between the knowledge of right and wrong and the activity of conscience. The knowledge of right and wrong comes from a variety of sources. It is inborn, for one thing, innate. Men know by nature that some things are wrong and some things are right. God has made us moral beings who have a sense of right and wrong. In addition, we receive training from our parents, from society and from our companions. All of them impress upon us certain standards of right and wrong. Some of these standards are pretty poor and we are deceived by them. Our parents, the church, the government tell us what is right and wrong. But the conscience does not tell me what is right and wrong. The conscience "bears witness" by "accusing or else excusing" me, by telling me that I have done

wrong or telling me that I have done right. If you keep this distinction in mind you will have the answer to the claim of modern psychology that conscience is not inborn. That's what you hear so often: "Conscience is something that is learned; it is not inborn." They make their mistake by failing to distinguish carefully between conscience proper and the knowledge of right and wrong. This knowledge is acquired, for the most part, by a process of education. And sometimes this knowledge is wrong. I may be trained to believe that what is wrong is really right, and vice versa.

Part of our knowledge of right and wrong is connected with the necessity of obeying those who have authority over us. When these authorities give me wrong information I'm in a bad way, because then I'm going to have this conflict of either disobeying them or else doing something that is wrong. When the government tells me to bear arms, I may someday run into a conflict, if I'm told to take up arms in a manifestly unrighteous war. Then I'm going to have to make up my mind which commandment (Exodus 20:12 or 20:13) I'm going to obey. We can be glad that we don't have this conflict oftener than we do. Sometimes you don't know which commandment of God applies in a situation. If, besides this, you have wrong information given to you by society, by the culture in which you live, by the church to which you belong, then you're going to feel that things are wrong which are right. Your conscience won't work the same as someone else's. One man's conscience tells him that he should pray to the Virgin Mary; another man's conscience tells him not to do this. That's how psychologists prove that conscience is something that you learn. But your conscience doesn't tell you to pray to the Virgin Mary; the church told you. Your conscience tells you to do what is right. Conscience is a feeling of obligation, of "oughtness." But the question of what is right is difficult to answer.

Conscience never makes a mistake. It will never tell you to do what is wrong. It will never accuse you if you do what you believe is right. It will never excuse you if you do what you believe is wrong. But what people learn is right or wrong varies from person to person (Romans 14:1-23). People say, "My conscience tells me that this is wrong." What your conscience really tells you is that you shouldn't do this. Someone else told you that it was wrong. If you were Roman Catholics, it would be the church that told you it was wrong not to pray to the Virgin Mary. But what your conscience would tell you is that you should do what you have learned is the right thing. Paul sharply distinguishes between "the work of the law written in (our) hearts" and the conscience which bears witness to this fact that there is such a thing as right and wrong, that there is a law of God, the will of God.

"The work of the law" (2:15) is the knowledge of right and wrong. That's the first step. There are other things involved here. The work of the law is also to bring you to a consciousness of sin, to work contrition (Psalm 51:17) in you. But the first step is to tell you what is right and wrong. There are various sources from which we get our knowledge of right and wrong. 1. Innate - it comes to us by birth. 2. Society, the whole culture in which you live. 3. Parents. 4. Government. 5. The church. 6. The Bible - the greatest authority. All of these influence us as we become convinced that we ought to do some things and not do other things. Sometimes these influences are in conflict with one another. Conscience must always be corrected by the Bible. It is the only infallible source of the knowledge of right and wrong that we have. When God says that something is right or wrong, then you know for sure that this is infallible. The Roman Catholic system would place the church right next to the Bible; in fact, they would place it over the Bible. The church is there to tell you what the Bible says.

(See pages 30-31 for comments on Romans 2:16.)

Now we come to a wonderful description of the Jewish religious culture. "Behold, thou art called a Jew" (here it becomes plain to whom Paul is talking in this chapter), "and retest in the law" - you're proud of the law, confident that because you have it everything is right with you; you imagine that you have kept it - "and makest thy

boast of God" (2:17). That is pretty plain. The Jew boasted that he had the true God. He wasn't like the heathen who worshiped statues "made like to corruptible man, and to birds, ... beasts," etc. (1:23). The Jew knew the true God.

"And knowest his will" - he knows what God wants - "and approvest the things that are more excellent" (2:18). This could be paraphrased, "You know God's will and you know the difference between right and wrong." "... being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes" (2:18-20). All four phrases mean exactly the same thing. You are a guide, a light, an instructor, a teacher because you have been shown what is right and what is wrong. And you have "the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" (2:20). The word "form" here doesn't quite mean what it seems to mean in English. To the Greeks this word meant "the very essence of a thing." "You have the very essence of knowledge and of the truth in the law."

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (2:21). The first reaction of the Jew would be, "No, I don't steal." This isn't the answer that Paul wants. He had said (2:1) that the Jews did the same things that they condemned in others. If somebody asked me, "Do you steal?" I would say, "No." Are you sure that you don't steal? God says that you should help the poor and the needy (1 John 3:17). If God says that then you owe it to them - and a man who doesn't pay his debts is just as guilty as a man who robs a store at night. In fact, he's more guilty, because by walking out of a store with no intention of paying his bill a man is imposing on the trust of people. A thief who breaks into a store at night shows by this that he at least recognizes that what he is doing is wrong - he doesn't want people to see him. If we pay our bills in the store, do we also pay our bills in relation to the poor and the needy? Do we pay our bills in relation to the church? If the collection basket goes by and you put in a dollar, maybe God insists that there ought to be two, or five, or ten. So when that basket goes by, if there ought to be ten dollars in there, and you only put in one, you took nine dollars out. We think of things like this when Paul asks, "Dost thou steal?" Are we paying all the debts we owe? Are we paying them in full? Are we giving to those to whom God expects us to give? After all, it is his money; and when he asks us to use it in a certain way, then we owe it to him to obey.

"Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (2:21). This must have reminded a lot of these Jews of the question, "Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8) The answer would be, "Of course not! No one would think of doing this." But God goes on to say that they have robbed him (Malachi 3:8,9). In verse ten God himself says that if they don't bring their tithes into the storehouse they are robbing God.

"Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" (2:22). Again our reaction would be to say, "No, sir! I've been married to the same woman for 25 years, and I've been faithful." But the Bible says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). The Bible says that we should be clean, chaste and decent. When we fail to do this we are committing adultery. And who is there that can cast the first stone at the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11)? The Jews had nothing to brag about regarding their attitude toward divorce (Matthew 19:3-9).

"Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (2:22). The Jews would reply, "We never worship idols." But think what sacrilege means. Are you always in the right frame of mind when you're worshiping the true God? Do you always have your mind on what you're doing when you say your prayers? Sometimes when I'm leading the congregation in prayer I remember saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and the next thing I know is that I'm saying, "Forgive us our trespasses" - and the first trespass that I think of is the fact that I wasn't thinking about what I was asking God for in the previous petitions. Thoughtless praying is sacrilege. We wouldn't think of going into a heathen temple to pray. We wouldn't join the Masonic Lodge



and pray to the Grand Architect of the Universe. No, we attend the right church, pray to the right God and listen to the pure doctrine; and while we sit there we think about what's happening next week. I remember listening to Dr. Seth Erlandsson of Sweden (Lutheran Confessional Church) talking to the children of a parochial day school in Minnesota. He said, "I can hardly keep from crying when I think of what a wonderful education you are receiving compared to the education my children are getting in Sweden." When we don't appreciate spiritual blessings, that's sacrilege.

"Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is w<sup>r</sup>itt<sup>e</sup>n" (2:23,24). "Through you" ought to be "because of you." So often God's name is blasphemed because of the bad lives of Christians. Unbelievers say, "I'm not going to go to church; the people who go there are all hypocrites." That's just an excuse; but do we ever give them occasion to talk that way by the way we live? They say, "Your religion means nothing to me because the life you lead persuades me that your religion isn't what you say it is. You say that God is angry with sinners every day, but you keep right on sinning so thoughtlessly and carelessly."

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" (2:25-28). "Circumcision is fine, but if you don't obey the rest of the law it won't help you." We would say that if you lead a godless, wicked life, then your baptism doesn't mean much to you. If you're baptized, then you should also live the kind of life that is proper for a baptized child of God.

"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (2:29). "In the spirit, and not in the letter" means inwardly, not outwardly. People say, "I may not have obeyed the letter, but I've obeyed the spirit of the law." That's not what the Bible means here. You see, if you slow down for a stop sign and don't stop, but look up and down the street to make sure that there is no one coming, you say, "I've obeyed the spirit of the law which is intended to keep people from getting involved in accidents." The fact of the matter is that you didn't obey the law in the letter or in the spirit. You just broke the law. To keep the law in the spirit means to keep the law inside. To keep the law according to the letter means to keep it outside. If you stop for a stop sign because a policeman might be watching, you are keeping the law outwardly but your heart's not in it. When you stop for a stop sign because your conscience tells you, "The Lord Jesus who died for me tells me to obey every law including this law," then you are keeping the law in the spirit. So here Paul is saying, "If you're a Jew outwardly, according to the letter, that's not so important. What's important is that you are a Jew inside, in your heart. Your heart should be different from what it was before."

Jesus remarked on the outward righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees whose intent was to "be seen of men" (Matthew 5:20; 6:5). People who don't know any better may praise such outward religiosity, but God does not (Matthew 9:13; 23:1-39).

### ROMANS 3

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" (3:1). Paul had just said that a Jew could be lost. A Jew who was not a real Jew inwardly and whose circumcision was not an inward circumcision (2:29) would not be saved. But the Gentile who would keep the law without circumcision (2:26) would be saved. So somebody might ask, "Then what good is it to be a Jew?" In modern terms

we would say, "If it's true that a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or a Roman Catholic can be saved, why should I be a Lutheran? What profit is there in being a Lutheran?" The answer is, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles (the sayings) of God" (3:2). These words of God, even though a man does not believe them, are still God's words. They are still true words.

"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (3:3,4). That's as far as we had gotten in chapter 3 last time. God's Word remains true even if all men say that it is not true.

This view of the truth is entirely different from the one which is often propounded today, in which truth is whatever you consider to be true. I remember talking to --- who later became an instructor at the seminary in St. Louis. He said that Moses didn't write the Pentateuch, and that there were no O.T. prophecies concerning Christ. I asked, "What do you do with the words of Jesus, 'Moses ... wrote of me'" (John 5:46)? He said, "What of it? Jesus was a human being. He could make mistakes. I said, "If Jesus said that Moses wrote about him, and he did not write about him, then Jesus did not tell the truth." And he said, "Oh, yes, he did. Jesus told the truth because he was honestly convinced that the O.T. did talk about him."

This is not Paul's definition of truth. According to the new definition, truth is what you believe is true, even though it may not correspond with reality. Paul, however, says that even if men do not believe, God's Word will remain true. This clearly indicates that the truth of any proposition does not depend upon a man's opinion of it. God's Word is true whether or not men believe it. This is very comforting for us in our unbelief. I could say that even if I have doubts about God's Word once in awhile, being assailed by doubts, fears and uncertainties, that does not change the truth of God's promises. God's faithfulness remains even if I doubt. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). If I don't believe God's Word, then Paul says that the words of God are fulfilled which say that God must be justified in his sayings, and must overcome when he is judged (3:4). God will always be pronounced right. If we don't pronounce God right we are making liars of ourselves.

"But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (3:5). Our unrighteousness, or unrightness, commends the rightness of God because God has said, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (3:4). So if I am an unbeliever and don't believe God's Word I just make a liar out of myself. By making a liar out of myself I have established the truth of God's Word so much the more, because God said, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." In other words, when men do not believe God's Word they just prove that God's Word is true. There are other ways in which the Bible states this. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2:14). If a man says that the Word of God is "foolishness," that just proves that the Bible speaks the truth.

Some years ago a young man who was writing a Master's thesis for one of his classes at the University of Iowa came to see me. He was writing a history of the churches of Sac County, so he wanted some information on the history of our congregation. When he was ready to leave I said, "Wait a minute; I want to ask you a few questions. Are you a Christian?" He said, "Yes, I belong to the Christian Reformed Church; but I'm really a Unitarian." "That doesn't fit," I said, "because the Christian Reformed Church is strictly a Trinitarian body." I told him that this was a contradiction in terms to be a Unitarian and a member of the Christian Reformed at the same time. "Then you don't believe that Jesus Christ is true God, if you're a Unitarian?" He said, "That's right, I don't." You see, I didn't think that he knew what a Unitarian was. So then I asked him, "Do you know that you are going to hell?" He said that he didn't think so. I said, "You are going to hell even if you don't think

so." Then I told him what the Word of God said about people who don't accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and God. I went on for about five minutes telling him what sin is, and about the wrath of God against sin. Then I told him that God sent his Son into this world to die for our sins, and that there was forgiveness for him too, by the grace of God in Christ. But he put up his hand and sort of smiled and said, "Reverend, I thank you for your interest in my soul. I know that the Bible says that Jesus came into this world to die for the sins of mankind. But do you think I'm fool enough to believe that God would send his Son into this world, if he had a Son, to die for men who are nothing but insignificant specks in the universe? That's a lot of foolishness." I said, "Do you know that you are a living testimony to the truth of the Bible? This is exactly what the Bible says you are going to say. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him'" (1 Corinthians 2:14). So when this man says that the Bible is a lot of foolishness his unrightness establishes (commends) the rightness of God (3:5).

When a man is a sinner in any way, his being a sinner proves that God is right. I used this same argument once with a Jew who had come to talk about the Christian religion. I told him about the Lord Jesus being the Son of God and dying for him. He said, "It would be nice if a person could believe things like that, but it sounds like a lot of foolishness to me." Then I said, "Do you know that's exactly what the Bible said you're going to say?" And I quoted 1 Corinthians 2:14 again. He caught on right away. He said, "Do you mean that that says that I'm a natural man?" I said, "That's exactly what it means. You're a natural man because this is exactly the attitude that an unbeliever takes." And he said, "That's remarkable!" He could see the implication of this biblical statement about the natural man.

You will run into people who make fun of the Bible and ridicule it as though today only fools believe what it says. Someone will argue that an up-to-date person with a modern education and some scientific training need not believe it anymore. He doesn't say that because he's up-to-date and modern, but because he's a natural man. And he says it because the Bible is right; it predicts such a reaction. The wrongness, the unrighteousness of people simply points out the rightness of God's Word. When people don't believe God's Word they are saying that God is a liar. Thus they make liars out of themselves, establishing the fact that God's Word is true.

There are other ways in which "our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God" (3:5). After a man sins, his forgiveness through Christ establishes the truth of God's Word, because God says that he will be gracious to sinners (Exodus 33:19; 34:6). Think of all the people in the Bible and tell me very quickly which person you would pick out as being a wonderful example of God's gracious love and forgiveness. ... The thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). This is the one that you usually think of first. Well, why don't you think of St. John, or St. Peter? You'd be a little more apt to think of St. Peter (Matthew 26:69-75). But why not St. John? He wasn't an awful sinner as far as we know; we have a record of very few of his sins. There was the time when he and James came with their mother to ask Jesus for a high position in his kingdom (Matthew 20:20-24; Mark 10:35-41). Does that sound like such a terrible crime? But the thief on the cross - there's a good example of God's grace. So who's a better example of God's grace - John, or the thief on the cross? Really both were saved by grace, by grace alone. Yet the thief on the cross is a better example. Why? Because he was a bigger sinner. So the bigger a sinner you are, the more you will glorify God by your forgiveness - right? "Our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God" (3:5). The badness of men points up the goodness of God. The worse the sinner is, the more glorious the grace of God which saves him.

Well then, Paul says, "What shall we say?" If our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, "is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (3:5-7).

When I lie, I prove that God is true - right? In other words, my lie glorifies the Lord, doesn't it? And if this is true, that the badness of the thief on the cross gives us a wonderful example of God's grace, just think what the world would be like, what the gospel would be like, without the example of the thief on the cross. Think of how many people have been comforted by that story. The people who have found hope in the story of the thief on the cross must run into the millions. All of us at one time have found comfort in that story. If the disciples hadn't been afraid on the Sea of Galilee during the storm (Matthew 8:23-27), would we have this wonderful story of Jesus stilling the storm? If David hadn't sinned with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-4), would we have Psalm 51? You see how the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness of God (3:5), how the lies of men establish the truth of God (3:7).

What does human reason say now? What would be the logical conclusion? The worse you are, the more you glorify the Lord! Why should God punish you for being a sinner? Why should God punish you for being a liar, if you're just fulfilling his Word? That question arises in many different ways.

Take the example of Judas who betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15); for that Judas was damned (Acts 1:25). He went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5). Suppose that Judas had not betrayed Christ, what would we have to say about the O.T.? It wouldn't be true. The O.T. predicted that one of the disciples would betray Christ (Psalm 41:9) for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12,13). So people ask, "Was Judas free to do this? Didn't he have to do this?" Why did Judas betray Christ - to fulfill the truth of God, or because he loved money (John 12:6)? See, what Judas did does show the rightness of God's Word, but his intention was not to glorify the Lord. Then human reason asks, "Why does God punish Judas if he has to do this?" But he isn't forced to do it; he wants to do it. Still somebody says, "He couldn't get by without doing it because the prophecy said that he would." I don't know how to reply to that, how you're going to justify God here. But it isn't our business to justify God, as John Milton (1608-1674) tried to do in his Paradise Lost. His purpose, he said, was to justify the ways of God to men, to show men how right God is.

Paul doesn't argue the case either, when somebody asks, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" (3:5), when God punishes a sinner like this. Take another example. The Bible says that Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). God had determined from all eternity that Jesus should die. When the Jews delivered him up to death this was a fulfillment of the will of God. And yet, in spite of anything that Vatican II might say, the Jews are held responsible in the Bible for the death of Christ (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 7:52). And Pontius Pilate is held responsible for the death of Christ (Acts 4:27). Yet they're doing what God from eternity intended should be done. Is God fair when he punishes them and holds them responsible for this? Paul doesn't try to justify God and show how right God is. He simply says, "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (3:6). Finally, every man is in the same boat - not only Judas, or the Jews, or Pontius Pilate - every single person on earth is a living testimonial to the truth of God's Word. The bigger a sinner he is, the more the Bible is shown to be right when it says that all men are sinners (3:23). And yet God is the judge of the whole world and is going to punish the people who break his Word because of unbelief.

"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (3:7). If this is true, that God is glorified by wickedness, then why shouldn't we be wicked? If I can prove that God is right by being a big sinner, if I demonstrate the rightness of God's condemnation of the whole human race by showing how corrupt and depraved a human being can be, then "why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" Why shouldn't I go out and live a godless life since this too will redound to the glory of God? Well, it will redound to the glory of God, but it will also show how righteous God is in punishing sinners. Paul says that people who argue so unrealistically are justly damned (3:8).

"And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just." (3:8). We have no right to imagine that because our wickedness will glorify God in one way or the other it's perfectly all right to be wicked. The end does not justify the means. In the final analysis, the damnation of the sinner will be part of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who is glorified in the damnation of the sinner who rejected him.

"God is unfair in his dealings with men!" You hear this all the time. People will ask, "Do you really believe that children are born sinful?" Then we have to say, "Yes" (Genesis 5:3; Psalm 51:5). "They're under the wrath of God?" We have to say that they are. "Well, they haven't done anything; they can't help it." That's what you always hear, "They can't help it." This is right in one way. They come into the world as sinners under the wrath of God; and you might say that they are born the way that God determined they would be born, because of the fall into sin. "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (Genesis 3:16) because your children are going to be sinners too. This is God's judgment on man's fall, and it doesn't sound fair to us when God holds children responsible for the sin with which they are born. But God is the Judge, and he decides what is right in this world, not I. There are a lot of things that don't sound right to us. We ought to recognize this. When you try to make everything sound right to human reason concerning God's ways, then you end up denying that God does what the Bible says he does. If it doesn't seem right to men, that's all right, because God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). The things of God are foolishness (1 Corinthians 3:19) to the natural man.

That finishes the discussion on the Jews. "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (3:9). Paul now includes himself with the Jews. "After all this discussion, can we say that we are better than those Gentiles? No, they are all under sin." In Romans 1 Paul proved that the Gentiles are sinful. In Romans 2 and the first part of 3 he said that the Jews are sinful. There is no real difference between them.

"As it is written (Psalm 14:1-3), There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:10-12). Before we look at these passages individually, I'd like to call your attention to what Paul is doing. In Romans 1 he gives many examples of Gentile sinfulness. Then he says that the Jews are sinful, and gives all kinds of instances of this. Now he summarizes his whole doctrine by saying that they are all under sin (3:9). Finally, he quotes a whole string of Bible passages. Where do we give a doctrinal statement, with Bible passages following? In our catechisms, out of which we were instructed, which use the proof passage method of establishing doctrinal truth.

People often say, "You have to get rid of the proof passage method; we don't quote individual Bible passages to prove doctrines." This cramps the style of your Neo-Orthodox theologians. They would rather operate with the whole Scripture, not individual statements of Scripture, but the whole Scripture. They talk about the ideas behind the words of Scripture, not the clear words of Scripture. But this is contrary to what we learned from childhood. If you want to establish a truth, you use a Bible passage and say, "This is what the Bible says." There is a danger in this. We are always accused of an atomistic use of Scripture when we do that. And you have to be careful not to quote Bible passages out of context. You know what that means: to quote a passage in a way in which it is never intended to be used in Scripture.

For instance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union quotes "Touch not; taste not; handle not" (Colossians 2:21). I once had a lady from the W.C.T.U. come to my house to give me some literature. She asked me if I would preach a temperance sermon the following Sunday, as the rest of the brethren would be doing. "No," I said, "I already have my text picked out for next Sunday. Besides, I wouldn't preach your

kind of temperance anyway. I don't believe in the kind of temperance preached by the W.C.T.U. I don't care for beer myself; but I think it's perfectly all right for some body to have a bottle." She said, "But the Bible forbids it." I said, "No, the Bible does not forbid it." She said, "Yes it does. It says, 'Touch not; taste not; handle not.'" I said, "No - do you think that that means touch not, taste not, handle not beer? That means touch not, taste not, handle not W.C.T.U. literature!"

The Bible actually says, "If you have been set free by Christ, why do you let people give you orders like: touch not, taste not, handle not?" (Colossians 2:14,20,21) The W.C.T.U. was quoting out of context. The Bible says that you shouldn't let anybody give you orders like this. By saying that people should not even "touch" the alcohol in vanilla extract, the W.C.T.U. is using this passage in the very way that the Bible says these rules should not be used. Quoting out of context does not mean that you quote just one verse out of a whole chapter. If the sentence is quoted in the meaning that it has in the chapter, you are quoting correctly, and you have a perfect right to do this. This is what Paul does. But modern theologians call this an atomistic use of Scripture. They sneer at a "proof passage religion."

Now let's look at the passages. "As it is written" introduces these verses. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (3:10). That's a plain statement of the depravity or the unrighteousness of all men. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (3:11). That's the negative statement. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:12). This is the judgment of the Bible on human beings. It is not the judgment to which human reason would come. Human reason says, "There is something good in everyone. Even the most depraved criminal has something good in him." Judging from a human standpoint we might come to that conclusion.

I remember the young man who was picked up for robbing a taxicab driver. He was working for us on the farm, living at our house at the time. The detectives went up the stairs to arrest this young fellow, and the taxicab driver said to me, "You know who those fellows are?" I said, "No." He said, "Those are two detectives from the St. Paul police force." I said, "Did he do something wrong?" He said, "He held me up last night, about a half mile from here. He pulled a gun on me and marched me out of the taxi into a field. He took all of my money, but he was awfully nice about it when I told him that I didn't have any money for breakfast. He gave me back the change and just kept the bills." Well I thought that was a nice gesture on his part. So did the taxicab driver. "There's something good in everybody."

But the Bible says that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:12). It's not talking about people who rob taxicab drivers. It's talking about everybody. There is no one who does good in the sight of God (Galatians 3:11). This is what God says in his Word, "as it is written" (3:10). You would never come to that conclusion yourself. There are a lot of good people about whom we don't know anything bad. If I had to prove that you were sinners on the basis of what I know about you, I don't think that I could do it. And most of you would have a hard time proving that I am a sinner. But God says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:12).

"Their throat is an open sepulchre" (3:13). That's pretty strong language. Open a grave, and there's rotting flesh in it. When men open their mouths, there's a mass of corruption down in that pit. "Their throat is an open sepulchre" (Psalm 5:9). That gives you a halitosis that all the Listerine in the world isn't going to cure. "... with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips" (3:13). This is what the Bible says about people (Psalm 140:3). What they say can be worse than a rattlesnake's bite, causing a great deal of pain.

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (3:14; Psalm 10:7). "Their feet are swift to shed blood" (3:15; Proverbs 1:16). "Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known" (3:16,17; Isaiah 59:7,8). "There is

no fear of God before their eyes" (3:18; Psalm 36:1). They live as if they knew nothing of the anger and wrath of God against sin. This is the description of the human race that is given us by God in his Word bearing out the testimony of St. Paul.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped" (3:19). All people are under the law. These judgments which God pronounces here in the law apply to all men. The word "stopped" here has the same meaning as it has as a noun, when you talk about the plug or stopper on a sink. Here men stand before God's judgment throne and he says, "You are a lousy bunch of sinners." What's man's first reaction then? He opens his mouth to defend himself, an instinctive reaction. "What wrong did I ever do?" By shoving a Bible passage down our throats God "stops every mouth" of men. When men open their mouths to talk about how good they are, as they always do, the way to gag them is to quote these Bible passages to them. "...and all the world may become guilty before God" (3:19). Everyone in the world is guilty before God's judgment throne.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). Paul had said that "the doers of the law shall be justified" (2:13). But here he says, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." That seems to be a contradiction. The one says the very opposite of the other. In 2:13 Paul says that people shall be justified by doing the law. (This is idealistic; no one succeeds in doing the law.) How do we reconcile 2:13 with 3:20? What do we do with this? We find the reconciling statement in 3:10. "There is none righteous, no, not one." If a man would keep all of the commandments he would be justified by doing the law (2:13). But "there is none that doeth good" (3:12). Therefore "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (3:20). Here "flesh" is a figurative expression for human beings.

But if we said only this, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," we would be quoting the Scripture out of context, because it would not be true. People are justified by the deeds of the law all over the world every day. How? Whenever a man proves in court that he has obeyed the law he is justified by the deeds of the law. If he has enough evidence to prove that he didn't speed, or that he did stop for a stop sign, he will be declared not guilty. When the government takes no action against me, it is saying that it has no reason to accuse me of a crime. So men are justified all the time by the deeds of the law - but not "in his sight" (3:20). In God's sight no one is justified by the deeds of the law. If I say that you are all good people - and I don't hesitate to say it - I am justifying you. As far as I know you don't break the law; I've never seen you do anything wrong. I have to justify you. If I get into the pulpit and preach God's Word, that's something else, of course. In my sight you're all right - but not "in his sight," in God's sight.

If you keep this in mind, this will help you reconcile Paul with James. Romans 3:20 is the passage you ought to look at when you try to reconcile Paul with James, not just Romans 3:28. Paul says that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (3:28). James writes, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). If you quote those two passages all by themselves, certainly you have a contradiction. You tear them out of context, making one say the very opposite of the other. Luther makes the contradiction even worse when he translates, "So halten wir es nun, dasz der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben" (3:28). Man is justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. And James says that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone, "nicht durch den Glauben allein" (James 2:24). This passage bothered Luther a lot. Melancthon has a long section on this passage in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. He comes out all right at the end, but his explanation of this passage is too long. If you would just look at the context everything would become clear. James is talking about judgment in the sight of man. He starts out, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14). James is talking about a man who goes around saying that he has faith,

but he doesn't have any works to back up that statement. You may think that that's a rather farfetched proposition, but there are plenty of people like that in the world. Sure, they "have faith," but they certainly don't give any evidence of it by the way they live. In fact, sometimes they give real good negative evidence too.

Some of you may have heard me tell this story - I think I told it last year in Doctrine II class - about a church member that we excommunicated in --- congregation. This man was a wife beater and a drunkard; he wouldn't come to church and he wouldn't let his family come to church. In fact, that's when he beat his wife the most, when she wanted to come to church. I've told you (see under 1:12) about this church member who came back from Des Moines with a verdict of incurable arthritis. He and this man were neighbors. While he was at the hospital for a long period of time this neighbor of his went over and chopped down all the trees on the fence line between the two properties - but they were his neighbor's trees, on his property. He hauled them home for firewood while his neighbor was in the hospital. The only reason he stayed out of jail was because the other member of our church didn't prosecute him. The sheriff offered to arrest him, but he said, "No, let him go; just have him bring the wood back." That settled that. But this was a member of our congregation.

The previous pastor had been admonishing him, so I went to admonish the fellow too, for all the sins of which he was guilty. He used the name of God in vain in every single sentence. He was just bad all the way through. When I went to admonish him, and told him that we were going to put him under church discipline, he threatened to kill me. So I went and got the biggest elder that we had in the congregation and went back again the next day. We admonished him once more. This time he was sullen and wouldn't answer any questions. We finally left, and excommunicated him.

Well, a little more than a year later he came to the house and wanted a conscientious objector slip signed. He was 56 years old at the time, and had a son coming up to draft age. He wanted to establish conscientious objector status for the family. He wanted me to sign this document for the draft board saying that we considered it wrong to fight in wars. And I said, "But we don't consider it wrong. This is not the position of our church." He replied, "The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill'" (Exodus 20:13). (He was drunk when he came with his slip too.) So I said, "Look, the Bible also says, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers' and that the government 'beareth not the sword in vain'" (Romans 13:1; 13:7). He said, "No, the Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'" He could quote the Bible real well if he wanted to. But this was the fellow who tried to murder another man because of some business disputes; and he had stolen. But when it suited his purpose he could quote the Bible.

Well, I wouldn't sign it, and he wouldn't leave. He said that I had to sign it. So I said, "I can't sign that document, but I'll write out another one, and I'll sign that." So I went to the typewriter and I wrote: "To whom it may concern, This is to certify that the official position of --- Church concerning the bearing of arms is the following." I quoted the article from the Augsburg Confession which says that our churches with unanimous consent do teach that it is right to bear arms, to act as soldiers. Then I signed my name to this and gave it to him. I said, "You take this down to the draft board and they'll know what to do with it." He didn't know what had happened to him. He was satisfied.

Then he wanted to leave, but I said, "Now just sit there awhile and I'm going to talk to you about something else." I talked to him about his soul, and told him that he was lost and that he was going to hell. But he said, "Oh no, I'm not going to hell." I said, "You most certainly are going to hell if you keep on living the way you do. You're not a Christian. Why don't you come to church?" He said, "I wouldn't be caught dead in that church." I said, "I guarantee you that it will be that way. They wouldn't have you dead in that church either. You can't be given a Christian funeral; you are not a Christian." Then he started cursing the congregation members because they had excommunicated him. And I said, "Don't you say a word against those people. They



didn't want to excommunicate you. I had an awful time on my hands when I insisted that they had to throw you out of the church. If you want to curse anyone curse me." Finally he came up to the desk and put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Oh, Reverend, don't worry so about me; I'm not going to hell. You're a nice guy. I believe in Jesus, and the Bible says that 'whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life'" (John 3:16). Well, what would you do with a fellow like this? I said, "That's a relief; I thought all the time that you were an unbeliever."

You see, this is the kind of fellow that James is talking about. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?" (James 2:14). I told him, "No, you don't believe in Jesus. If you believed in Jesus you wouldn't live the way you do." This is the worst case that I ever saw of a person who says that he has faith and doesn't have any works. He had so many works that proved that he wasn't a Christian that there was no question about it anymore. So what was I calling him when I said, "No, you're not a Christian"? A liar. I was saying, "You're not right." In other words, I was refusing to justify him. To "justify" means to say that someone is all right, and I was saying that he was all wrong.

What good does it do if a man says that he has faith? Can such a faith without works save him? "If a brother or sister be naked," for example, "and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2:14-16). You might find some starving person on the street in front of your house. You might stand there and wring your hands about the poor soul not having any food. And you might say, "I sure wish that you had something to eat." If you went in and sat down to a big steak dinner while this fellow was starving out there, what would he call you? A liar. If you really wished good for him you wouldn't let him lie out there in his poverty.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by his works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:17-24). But before whom is a man justified? "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). Do you see the relationship of "in his sight" (3:20) to "shew me"? "Shew me" means "put it in my sight; let me see your works." If you do this, I'll say, "You're right. I believe that you are a Christian, not just because you say so, but because of what you do." I don't have to say, "Your actions speak so loudly that I can't hear what you say." The only way that I have of knowing whether or not a man's claim to being a Christian is true is by looking at his works, what kind of life he lives. God judges differently. James is talking about justification in the sight of men; there you will be justified by faith and works. Paul is talking about justification in the sight of God; there you are justified by faith alone. Works look all right to me, but God says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:12). "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). All the best things that people do are evil. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). That's what the law is for, to show evil men that they are sinners and guilty in the sight of God.

This is the end of the first division of Romans. It is a severe preaching of the law. Paul is trying to impress upon all his readers, and us, that no one is ever going to be declared righteous in the sight of God on the basis of what he has done. We have done nothing that is right or good. No matter what it is, men deserve to go to

hell for the very best things that they have done. This is so hard for human reason to accept. We are perfectly willing to say that a man is to be damned for his sins, and then we think only of the positively evil things he has done. But if you take the very best works that men do, the "glittering vices" as Luther called them (by which he meant the best works of the unbelievers, the kindness, the natural love that they show to others), these, in the sight of God, are condemned as bad, wicked and evil, because the tree is corrupt at its very root through original sin. Nothing good can come from this tree. This is the judgment of the law.

The law is preached to us in that way to convince us that we are sinners; that's what it's for. Any questions? This is an unrelieved preaching of wrath and condemnation. There's not much cause for happiness in the first 2½ chapters of Romans. From 1:18 on it is practically an unrelieved preaching of the law, saying that if you want to go to heaven you'd better keep all the commandments. But not one person keeps the law; therefore not one soul is going to be pronounced just at God's judgment seat. That's all that you can get out of this section.

But now Paul turns to the gospel. The rest of Romans is one of the most glorious sections of the Bible proclaiming the grace and forgiveness of God that we have anywhere. From chapter 3, verse 21 on to the end of chapter 11, you have one of the most wonderful gospel sermons that you can find anywhere in Scripture.

Since nobody can be pronounced justified in the sight of God there seems to be no hope for men. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested" (3:21). Following the English translation, it's not so easy for us to see the connection between 3:21 and 3:20, where Paul says that no flesh shall be justified, or found righteous, in the sight of God. Here you begin to realize what is meant by "the righteousness of God" (3:21). It is the righteousness which I have in his sight when I am justified, when he declares me righteous, when he says that I have righteousness. (See comments on 1:17.) That would be another way of explaining this phrase, "in his sight" (3:20). When you are declared righteous by someone, that person looks at you as being righteous, or having righteousness. So, no one shall be justified in the sight of God by the deeds of the law (3:20), "but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (3:21). Here the word "law" is used in two different senses. "Law" is used figuratively, in the broader sense, when you speak of "the law and the prophets," the O.T. Scriptures. We use the word "gospel" in a broader sense too, as in "the Gospel according to St. Matthew." Matthew's Gospel really contains a lot of law, just as the Law of Moses, the Pentateuch, contains a lot of gospel.

When we call the books of the Bible written before the time of Christ the Old Testament, we're really calling it the "law." And New Testament means "gospel." (See 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6,9.) In the Bible, O.T. never has the connotation of a set of books written before the time of Christ. That usage came in only after the Bible was written. (See Hebrews 9:15,20.) The Bible never speaks of the books written after the time of Christ as the N.T. Both parts are called Scripture; both are called the Word of God. The terms O.T. and N.T. are not biblical terms, but have developed in common usage to refer to the books of the Bible. O.T. and N.T. are simply words for "law" and "gospel." Originally "law" was used as a name for the first five books of the O.T., and "gospel" was the name for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But then we apply that word "gospel" to all the books of the N.T. and call it the N.T., or "gospel." It's a figure of speech, using the name of the part for the whole, Latin: pars per toto. Paul also uses the word law in the narrow sense, the sense in which it is used in 3:20. "By the deeds of the law" refers to the deeds required by the law of God in the strict sense.

But now there is a "righteousness of God," a righteousness in the sight of God, "without the law" (3:21). It has nothing to do with the works of the law; it doesn't depend on our keeping the law. It is a righteousness without the deeds of the La

This righteousness is "manifested" by "being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (3:21). Here "the law and the prophets" is a technical term for the books of the O.T. The Jews spoke of their O.T. as "the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (or the Scriptures)." That was the full name for the O.T. Sometimes the phrase "law and prophets" is used for all the books of the O.T. including the Writings, or Scriptures. Usually in the N.T. the term Scripture was a name for the whole O.T. Originally, as far as we know, the term Scripture stood only for the last books of the O.T. as they were arranged in the Hebrew Bible. So here Paul is using "the law and the prophets" as a designation for the whole O.T. which gives witness to the righteousness of God.

In the O.T. already God spoke of a righteousness which comes in another way than by the keeping of the law, Paul means to say. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (3:22-25).

This then is "the righteousness of God without the law" (3:21) "which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (3:22). Faith of Jesus Christ is faith in Jesus Christ. Just as the praise of God might be the praise that I give to God, so "the faith of Jesus Christ" is the trust that I give to Jesus, the trust that I put in Jesus. This righteousness of God is "upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:22,23). The phrase, "the glory of God," is like the phrase, "the righteousness of God" (1:17), which we discussed. Remember what John wrote about the people who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). The Greek word for praise there was *doxa*, which is the same word translated here as "glory." So instead of saying "the glory of God" you could just as well translate here: "All have sinned and come short of the praise of God" (3:23). In this context it should not be hard for you to determine what is meant by "the glory of God" or "the praise of God."

Paul is talking about a man being justified in the sight of God (3:20). This means that God looks at a person and says, "You are just, you are righteous, you are not guilty, you are without sin, you are innocent." Well, if God says this, he is praising us. So the praise, or glory of God (3:23) is the glory or the praise that God gives to us; he justifies us. And why do men "come short of the glory of God?" Because God justifies those who keep the law. But no one has kept the law; all have sinned (3:23). If people were to come before God on the basis of their own works or their keeping of the law, they would "come short." They would fail to receive this praise that God gives us when he says, "You are not guilty. You are righteous."

Though people come short of the praise that God gives if he were to justify on the basis of their own works, there is righteousness in the sight of God for them by faith in Christ Jesus. So they are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:24). "Being justified" is a participle which modifies a noun, the noun being "all." "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely" (3:23,24). This is a statement of a truth which Paul states more clearly later on, namely, that all men are justified. It is "upon all them that believe" (3:22). It becomes the possession of those that believe. But it is nevertheless pronounced on all men; it is proclaimed "unto all" (3:22). The same "all" who have sinned are the "all" who are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (3:24,25).

This word, "propitiation," is a very interesting word. Propitiation is not a popular word today among theologians and Bible translators. The RSV, for example, changes propitiation to expiation. This is still all right; it still says the same thing in one way. Christ is the expiation (the one who makes amends) for our sin.

But there is one idea in the original "propitiation" which is missing from "expiation." Propitiate means to make favorable; propitious weather is favorable weather. If propitiation is necessary, if it is necessary to make somebody favorable toward someone else, then it follows that he was unfavorable to begin with. To propitiate really means to take away disfavor, to remove anger. Propitiation is a peace offering, something that is supposed to take away enmity and establish peace.

Modern theology doesn't like this word because it implies that God is angry, that God looks upon the human race with disfavor. This is exactly what Paul has been impressing upon us in the first 2½ chapters of Romans. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (1:18). God is angry with men, and the Jews come under that condemnation too. We are no better than they (2:1), Paul says, because God says that we are all guilty (3:9). "There is none righteous" (3:10). Every mouth is stopped and all the world is guilty before God (3:19). This angry God is filled with fury and vengeance. Yes, Paul uses the word vengeance (3:5). This wrath of God must be removed somehow. This is done through the propitiation which is in Christ Jesus.

It so happens that the Greek word translated here with the English word "propitiation" is the same word that's used to translate the O.T. word which in our English Bibles is translated as "mercyseat" (Hebrews 9:5). So you can just as well say that Christ is the Mercyseat. But this doesn't help us a great deal because the word mercyseat doesn't mean too much in itself. You have to explain the whole business before the word has any real significance. In Hebrew the word "mercyseat" is kapporeth, the word that ends up as propitiation in the N.T. This kapporeth was the mercyseat on the ark of the covenant. The ark, as you know, was a wooden box covered with gold. (Exodus 25:17-22). It was kept in "the most holy place" (Exodus 26:33,34). The golden cover of the ark, flanked by cherubim, was called the mercyseat. Kapporeth means cover. This word is related to the word kippur. About a week ago was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-34) which the Jews celebrate to this day. But they can't celebrate it as God told them to celebrate it because you can't celebrate Kippur without the kapporeth, the cover (Leviticus 16:15), which they don't have.

One converted Jew who was brought up in Poland told the story of his conversion. He said that when he was a boy he would go with his mother to the synagogue to celebrate Yom Kippur. He heard this story about the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). One year when they were going through the service he thought of this story and he asked his mother, "Mother, where is the blood?" She just told him to be quiet. But that question bothered him for years. "Where is the blood for Yom Kippur?" Then he heard the story of Jesus on the cross, and he realized that here was the blood for Kippur, the Day of Atonement. So his question was answered.

This Day of Atonement is spelled out for us in great detail in Leviticus 16. It was to be observed once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month. The high priest was to come to the temple with a bullock and two goats. He was to kill the bullock as a sin offering for himself (v.11) and sprinkle the blood of it with his finger seven times on the mercyseat (v.14) to make a kippur, a covering, an "atonement" (v.1) (We'll talk about "atonement" in a little while.) Then he was to kill one of the goats as a sin offering for the people and sprinkle its blood on the mercyseat (v.15) to make a covering for the people. A covering for what? Well, this was the place where God said he would meet with his people (Exodus 29:43; 40:34). And in the Psalms (80: God is spoken of as dwelling between the cherubim. God told Moses that he would speak to him "from above the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:22) and tell him what to tell the people. So this was God's dwelling place among his people in a very special sense.

In the ark, under the mercyseat, were the two tables of the Law given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20). Since Moses broke the first stone tablets of the law when he saw the Israelites worshiping the golden calf (Exodus 32:19) God gave him another two tables of stone (Exodus 34:1) which were placed in the ark of the covenant.

Symbolically we might say that when God looks down from above the mercyseat he sees right through it and sees the Law, that same Law broken by the Israelites. So, humanly speaking, we might say that every time God looks down from heaven he is reminded of the sins of men. The fact that people have not lived up to the Ten Commandments is brought to God's attention again and again. But the high priest was sent in to sprinkle blood over the mercyseat, to make a kippur, a covering. When I draw a covering over something I don't see it anymore. So also this blood is a covering which God sees; his sight stops at the mercyseat. If the covering isn't there we have to say, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight" (3:20). But when the mercyseat with the blood is in place God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin" (Psalm 85:2). "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1).

This idea of covering our sin is one we still employ today when we sing, "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness my beauty are, my glorious dress" (TLH 371:1). When we talk about Jesus' blood and righteousness as the clothing we wear, we speak of it as our covering for sins. The last stanza of "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less" uses the same expression. "When He shall come with trumpet sound, / Oh, may I then in Him be found, / Clothed in His righteousness alone, / Faultless to stand before the throne" (TLH 370:4). Clothed in Jesus' righteousness we can stand faultless or justified, sinless and righteous before the judgment throne of God. Thus Jesus is our Mercyseat.

But how do we get to the word "propitiation" (3:25)? By the fact that God doesn't see the sin anymore. He doesn't see that which made him angry, the violation of his commandments. If the Lord doesn't see those sins anymore his anger has been taken away.

We said that to propitiate means to make favorable. "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger" (Psalm 85:1-3). Do you see how all these ideas are combined in just a few verses? The high priest made a propitiation for sins by sprinkling the blood on the mercyseat. But it wasn't a very good cover. It wore off all the time. Every year the high priest had to go in again and sprinkle some more blood. The blood of animals wasn't really good enough to take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). But now Jesus has entered into the holy place with his own blood (Hebrews 9:12). This means that Jesus took his own blood and sprinkled it before God. Thus he covered up the sins of all men forever. That was just once. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). No more sacrifice is necessary. Jesus did everything for us once and for all when he offered up himself.

It would help the children in your school rooms if you would use the word "covering" to explain the meaning of propitiation. The meaning of the Greek word is closer to propitiation than covering, but you can keep "covering" in mind whenever the word propitiation occurs. When I was a boy I had to memorize the passage, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). It didn't mean a great deal to me. But I know that our pastor told us that propitiation means payment. This is related to the idea; Jesus is the payment for our sins. But the idea of covering is closer to the scriptural usage of the word. I would prefer to say, "He is the covering for our sins ..."

(Q.) Paul writes, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). Is this related to "the glory of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 7:2) in the temple? (A.) It depends on the context. The glory of God can be either the glory that God has in our sight or the glory that we have in God's sight. The glory of the Lord appeared to the Israelites (Exodus 19:16-18). "The glory of the Lord shown round about them" in the nativity story (Luke 2:9). There the glory of the Lord, or the glory of God, was that bright light in which he manifests his praiseworthiness. The glory of God can be

the praise that I give to God. "Soli Deo Gloria" is what Johann S. Bach (1685-1750) put at the end of his musical compositions. "To God alone the glory," or praise, is what the Latin means. I am sure that Bach meant that God should be praised for what he was able to write as well as being praised while people listened to his music or participated in its presentation (Matthew 5:16). Dr. R.C.H. Lenski placed these words Soli Deo Gloria at the end of his N.T. commentaries, reflecting the last verse of Romans, "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." (16:27). The glory of God can also mean that which moves me to praise him, the majesty which makes him worthy of my praise and adoration. Finally, when we are praised by God (2:29; 1 Corinthians 4:5), we are the kind of people that excite the praise of others. So you have four concepts here with the words, "the glory of God" (3:23), and what is actually meant must be determined by the context.

We still haven't talked about the word "atonement" in this connection. Why do we call this day of covering (kippur) the Day of Atonement? Well, atonement is a manufactured word with no real history behind it. You simply combine the words "at" and "one." Atonement is at-one-ment. Christ at-ones us with God, bringing about an at-one-ment between God and men. This implies that God and man are not at one; they are torn apart - by what? Sin. Our sins separate us from God. We are not at one; we are "at 6's and 7's" with each other. But then Jesus came to make atonement for our sins, to break down the wall (Matthew 27:51) between God and men.

This is the idea that we began with here. When you talk about propitiation, you know that God is angry with man; the sin is covered; God no longer sees the sin; his anger is put away; you have been propitiated. So Christ is the propitiation. On the Day of Atonement sin is removed, covered from the sight of God; men are sure of this, that the wall which separated them from God has been removed; God and man are once more joined together. An atonement has been made, which is another word for reconciliation. So the O.T. Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, was the day when God and man were at one, reconciled. God was propitiated, his anger against sin having been removed.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely (as a free gift, without any payment, without any works on our part, without any contribution from us) by his grace (another way of saying that we are justified freely) through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:23,24). Redemption, of course, means buying back, payment. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (3:25).

God forgave sins in the O.T. for the sake of the blood that was sprinkled on the mercyseat, the blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews 9:13). This blood testified to the fact that the animal had died. "The wages of sin is death" (6:23). God will not be satisfied until the sinner's debt is paid. The Israelites deserved to die because of their sins. After the sins of the people were laid on a goat, its life was taken. "The life of the flesh is in the blood ... it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). The blood was brought into the holy of holies to testify to the fact that there had been a death for the sins that made God angry. The people were to learn again and again from what they saw in the temple that "the wages of sin is death" (6:23). But everybody knew that a goat really couldn't take the place of all the people, that an animal couldn't be substituted for a man in the fullest sense. They knew, too, that God had promised to send "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29) who would be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," who "bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows," and of whom it was said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4-7). Though such a lamb, such a perfect sacrifice had not yet appeared, God forgave their sins.

God was forgiving sins in the O.T. without an adequate payment. And Paul says that Christ died to declare God's righteousness in forgiving the "sins that are past" (3:25). Suppose that a judge condemns a criminal whose crime calls for a payment of

\$5,000 and no less. The judge would say, "That's your fine. Can you pay it?" The fellow replies, "I've got 50¢ to my name." And the judge says, "Fine, let's have the 50¢ and we'll call it square." If he did that he wouldn't be fair. He wouldn't be operating according to the laws of the land. He's satisfied with less than the law requires. And the Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). When a man dies, it is for his own sins. But now one goat was dying for all the people. They must have known that this was not full payment.

I can imagine that some of the children of Israel would debate the question, "How is it possible for God to forgive our sins just because an animal has died?" Even if an animal died year after year, and even if they sacrificed a lamb every morning and every evening (Numbers 28:4), and even if they sacrificed a lamb for every sin of which they knew themselves to be guilty, it wasn't enough. Even if the people sinned unknowingly, they were still to bring sacrifices (Leviticus 5:17-19). They could never bring enough to satisfy the requirements of God's law, and they knew it. And now this one goat on the Day of Atonement should cover up the sins of all the people for a whole year? It looks as if God requires less than he says he requires. But now when God finally sends his Son to be the kapporeth, to make the kippur, the covering, it suddenly becomes clear what God had in mind all the time. It becomes clear that God is not satisfied with a payment that is only a token payment. Finally God's own Son Jesus Christ comes into the world and pours out his own blood. Is that enough? If this is really God's blood making the kippur, you can never say that an inadequate payment has been made, because that would be blasphemy. When I asked how the blood of an animal could cover up sin, I was asking the same question that the Bible implies when it says that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin (Hebrews 10:4), even though God said that he would cover sins with the blood of a goat. You might say that God is really overlooking something. He was forgiving sins through his forbearance. He wasn't requiring full payment. But now Jesus comes and sheds his holy, precious blood - holy because he is a perfectly sinless being, and precious because he is the Son of God. The Bible itself says, "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). It becomes clear that God does demand an adequate payment for sin. So God is a righteous God. So the propitiation which is found in the blood of Christ declares the righteousness of God "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (3:25). The "sins that are past" are the sins of the O.T., the sins that God forgave - as men looked at it - without adequate payment, just by forbearing, holding back part of his demands. The death of Christ declares that God demands full payment for sin. Thus he is a righteous judge, "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (3:26).

Though "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," sinners are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:23,24). The word propitiate means to make favorable, to take away anger. Some people today call this a primitive view of God, to say that his anger must be appeased. "He's not an angry God, but a kind God. A God who loves us can't be angry with us," they say. The problem is that in the Bible you have both statements. God is angry with us, and God is gracious to us.

Martin Luther said that the highest art of the Christian theologian is to distinguish properly between law and gospel. "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). In fact, "The wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth" (Psalm 11:5). God hates "all workers of iniquity" (Psalm 5:5). Of his own people God said, "There I hated them ... I will love them no more" (Hosea 9:15). Yet God says to Israel, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). People should pick on some of these passages when they talk about contradictions in the Bible. This is a real good contradiction. The Bible says that God is going to punish every sin, and then it says that God forgives every sin. You find this in Exodus 33, where Moses asks God to show him his glory, the glory that is his as God. God says, "There shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). But God puts Moses in a cleft

of a rock "and proclaimed the name of the Lord" to him (Exodus 34:5). What Moses really wanted to know was, "What kind of a God are you really like?" God's name is God's reputation, the name that he makes for himself by what he does. So God said, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6,7). This is where I stopped when I memorized these words in grade school. The rest of this passage gives you something of a shock. "And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children ... to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:7). There you have the contradiction. To visit sin means to punish sin. God says, "I'm the God who forgives sins, and I'm the God who punishes sins." This is the problem that Paul is wrestling with here. People who don't deserve God's verdict of not guilty are given a verdict of not guilty. Their forgiveness is a free gift. And how can God do that? "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (3:24,25).

The law says that God hates all sinners. The gospel says that God loves all sinners. The law says that God will punish every sin and the gospel says that God has forgiven every sin. When you hate something, what do you do? Push it away, right? And how do you express your love for something? By drawing it toward you. If a man loves money, he wants to get all of it that he can. So love is a desire to possess something, and hate is a desire to have nothing to do with something. What happened to Jesus on the cross while he was bearing our sins? How did God express his hatred for his own Son? He pushed him away. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Jesus suffered punishment for the sins of the whole world. Because Jesus did this, God has punished every sin. "If one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Corinthians 5:14). So when God says, "Every sinner shall die," I look to the cross and say, "But every sinner did die." Without the cross you can never make sense of the Bible. Without the idea of substitutionary atonement you can never make sense of law and gospel. Then what looks like a tremendous contradiction turns out to be the heart of the Christian religion.

Luther said, "If we would say that only a man died, and that God didn't die, then there would be no hope for us." If you put all people on one side of a scale and one man on the other side it would be completely lop-sided. But put the God-man on the scale, and it balances. If he hadn't become a human being, the Son of God would have had no blood to shed. God becomes a human being just so that he can die for the whole human race. This makes it clear how righteous God is, that he really means it when he says that every sinner shall die.

(Q.) Jesus is God, and he died. The Father in heaven is God, but he didn't die. How can this be explained? (A.) I don't know. Here's another problem: how can God say to God, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Bible says, "(You) killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3:15). The Prince of life means the giver of life, God. So Peter was saying, "You killed God." Paul told the Ephesian elders, "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). But "God is a Spirit," Jesus said (John 4:24). Later he said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). If God doesn't have flesh and bones he doesn't have blood, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). To all of this human reason says, "Impossible!" But Paul says that we "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We see again what Luther was talking about when he said, "A Christian's morning and evening sacrifice is the sacrifice of his reason."

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). God, who is pure spirit, is "manifest in the flesh," which is the opposite of spirit. If you want contradictions in the Bible, why not look at these passages? But we don't want to make liars (3:4) out of ourselves by contra-



dicting God. So if the Bible says that "the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8) was crucified, I'm going to say that he was crucified. If it says that "the Prince of life" was killed (Acts 3:15), I'm going to believe it. If the Bible says that God has blood then I'm going to believe that. If people reject this, we know that the things of God are foolishness to the natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14).

If God says to me that with the bread he's going to give me his body, and with the wine he's going to give me his own blood, then I'm going to believe it. Human reason says that this can't be so. But the Lord says, "This is my body and this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28). So when I come to the Lord's Table, if the Lord says, "That's what it is," and if my heart says, "That can't be so," I tell my heart to shut up. "You have no right to talk here; God's talking. So lay a finger on your mouth." Luther says, "Take off your hat, because the Holy Ghost knows more than you do." We accept all this with simple, childlike faith (Mark 10:15).

An older man, a very fine Christian, came to me some years ago after a Good Friday service and said, "Pastor, you misspoke yourself in your sermon." I said, "That can happen." He said, "You said that God died, and God can't die." I said, "I didn't misspeak myself; that's what I intended to say. I know that God can't die, but he did. Jesus is God and man, but you can't separate him into two persons. When Jesus died on the cross, it was God's body nailed to the cross, God's blood being shed, God's soul that left that body." The layman replied, "I guess you're right after all." This was just when Time magazine was featuring the God-is-dead theology and had a picture of Thomas Altizer on a front cover.

When I was a seminary student, we had a professor who was on the intersynodical hymnal committee which gave us The Lutheran Hymnal in 1941. This St. Louis professor told his class, "Boys, we had a hard time at our meeting. We fought hard to change a hymn the way it had to be changed, and got it the way it had to be." It was the second verse of "O Darkest Woe" (TLH 167). The old hymnal (Book of Hymns, 1931, NPH) had: "O sorrow dread! Our God is dead." They changed it to: "O sorrow dread! God's Son is dead." That's easier, huh? It doesn't strike us as forcefully as "Our God is dead." The German is: "O grosze Not, Gott selbst liegt tot." That is even stronger: "God himself lies dead."

I remember puzzling over that as a boy. I had learned that the only thing keeping the world in existence is God. God upholds "all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3). I thought that God holds up the world in his hand and makes it go around, like this. But he was dead for three days and the world didn't collapse. So I finally figured it out for myself. I knew that when you throw a kittenball good and hard it takes a long time to fall to the ground. Not knowing much physics at the time, I thought that a kittenball thrown straight out would take a lot longer to fall to the ground than a ball that is just dropped to the ground. So I thought that just before he died, Jesus gave the whole world one good toss and it flew all by itself for three days. When he came back to life he grabbed it and made it go around again. But I don't worry about such things anymore because I know that when Jesus was dead he was still alive. He was dead according to his human nature and he was alive according to his divine nature (Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 5:7; 1 Peter 3:18). "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). His body was laid in the grave and his soul was in heaven. It was still the soul of God and the body of God. How can God be separated that way? I don't know. Don't ask me how. That's just what the Bible says.

My mother and I were discussing something like this, and she said that when she was a girl the family would talk about the Sunday sermon at the noon dinner table. One day after they returned home from church they discussed the fact that the pastor had said that God died. The children were all saying that that couldn't happen, but the pastor had said that it was true. Finally their father said, "Children, when you were little you believed everything that I said. If I had told you to go out to

the barn because Fanny (the horse) had laid an egg, you would have gone looking for it. Now that you're grown up you probably wouldn't believe me anymore. Just believe God like you believed me when you were little. What the pastor said today is what the Bible says, and what the Bible says God says. Just believe it."

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (3:26). Paul's thought isn't very hard to follow here. It's very abbreviated. When God justifies a man, he is saying that this person is righteous, even though he has previously said of this same person, "You are not righteous. There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (3:10-12). God has said that everyone on earth sins and that all are guilty before God (3:23). And now this same God suddenly says that all men are not guilty. Here again you have two statements that are diametrically opposed to each other. If you let them stand side by side, you know what Luther meant when he said that law and gospel are more contradictory than contradiction.

This whole process of justification takes us into a courtroom in which God is the judge. A guilty sinner stands before him. What should God say if he is a righteous judge who tells the truth, a fair judge, "who will render to every man according to his deeds" (2:6)? God has to say, "Guilty." If God, entirely apart from everything else, would say, "This man is not guilty," he would be contradicting himself. But God sent Jesus to be the cover, the Mercyseat. The sinner is dressed now in the righteousness of Christ, through faith in his blood, which is the covering for sin. Now God looks at this sinner and says, "Not guilty." And God is telling the truth. This man has all the righteousness of Christ. There's no flaw in this. It is the righteousness of Christ, the work of Christ, which alone makes it possible for God to justify a man and still remain just himself. This ought to make clear to us why it is so absolutely necessary that you always keep the vicarious atonement of Christ at the heart of the Christian religion.

People think that they can talk about God's forgiveness apart from the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ. I told you before about --- who taught at ---. I said that he said that there were no prophecies of Christ in the O.T. In this discussion I asked him, "How were the people of the O.T. saved if they didn't believe in a promised Messiah?" He said, "By faith in a forgiving God." I said, "A God who forgives sins without Christ?" And he said, "Yes." The Mohammedans believe in that kind of God too. Wherever you go in the world you will find people talking about the forgiveness of sins in their own terms. I referred you to Samuel Zwemer (p.20). In his book he quotes a prayer spoken by an African chief. The chief asked his god to forgive his sin because he had sacrificed a chicken and had always tried to do what was right. So God ought to forgive him because he tried to do what was right to make up for what he had done wrong. So the concept of forgiveness isn't foreign to the heathen religions. But all these religions teach that God forgives sins without a proper propitiation, a proper payment. Then they attack the justice of God, who will reward "every man according to his deeds" (2:6).

This is the sort of forgiveness that is preached in modern Protestantism. William Sparior, a Methodist, in Power for Action, says that if a man does the best he knows how, and realizes that his best is not good enough, and comes to God for forgiveness, God will forgive him. This, he says, is justification by faith - and not a word about Christ! Paul, however, says that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:24). He made the payment, all \$5,000 of the fine, not just 50¢. And because the whole fine has been paid the judge can say, "You are free." If it hadn't been for the fact that Christ kept the law in my place and died in my place, God could not forgive me. He would be an unjust God. He would not be a God who tells the truth, because he has said, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). "The doers of the law shall be justified" (2:13). And you're not going to be justified without doing the law. But "by the deeds of the law there shall no

flesh be justified" (3:20). We couldn't obey the law of God, but Christ came and fulfilled it for us. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (10:4). He has redeemed us (Galatians 4:4,5).

God demands that all the commandments should be kept if anyone wants to be saved. He also demands in his justice that if a man sins, he shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). Well, Christ did it all. He kept the commandments for us and he died for us. Thus he does everything that God demands in the law, so God is not relaxing a single one of his commands or demands when he justifies me. Now we can say, "'If one died for all, then were all dead' (2 Corinthians 5:14). I was dead, 'crucified with Christ' (Galatians 2:20)." I died there for my sins just as surely as I can say, "I wrote you a letter," when my secretary wrote it for me. I can say, "I died," when Christ died for me. Because I have done all these things, God renders to me according to my deeds (2:6) when he says, "You are not guilty." I am not guilty in Christ. This is a phrase which becomes very significant for us in the Bible. Because we are in Christ, God can say, "Not guilty," and still be a just judge.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (3:27-31). Now that I've been justified before God, God himself calls me a Jew. What does "Jew" mean? "Praise." At the birth of her fourth son, Leah said, "'Now will I praise the Lord.' Therefore she called his name Judah" (Genesis 29:35). Paul said, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ... whose praise is not of men, but of God" (2:28,29). Since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23), the praise of God, no one is a real Jew. But now God calls me a Jew again, a "praised one," a real Jew. And I'm a praised one because God has said, "You are not guilty. You are free from all blame. You are holy."

Now if God says that I am perfect, then, of course, I can stand up before men and talk about how good I am. Didn't you have some reservations in your mind when I said before that I have kept the commandments? What does that sound like if I say, "I've done everything that God requires"? (Q.) Can you say that? (A.) Yes, I can. But what does it sound like? Boasting! And Paul says, "Since you've been justified by God (3:26), where does boasting come in? It's excluded. Why, by what law? of works?" (3:27). See, if you have been saved by your works, on your own, then you could stand up before the world and say, "Look at me! 'I thank thee, God, that I am not as other men are' (Luke 18:11). I've never done a single sin." I can say this in Christ. And to the world it may sound like a boast, so I don't say it to the world. Even if I were talking to a group of immature Christians, I'd be a bit hesitant about saying it so boldly. I'd lead them to that thought in a more gentle way. Because if you go around saying, "I've kept all the commandments," you will give people the wrong notion unless you explain this more fully.

But any kind of boasting is excluded because of the way in which I was declared righteous. Boasting is excluded "by the law of faith" (3:27). I've been justified by faith (3:28,30). This is the rule that was followed when I was declared righteous by God; I claimed the righteousness of Christ for my own. It is an alien righteousness. It's someone else's righteousness given to me freely, by grace. So when I say that I'm one of God's saints, I'm not boasting about how good I was; I'm boasting about how good God was to me. I'm glorifying God for his kindness, his mercy and grace, in being so good to me in Christ. In spite of all my wickedness, all my sins, all my guilt before him, God has, for Jesus' sake, declared me not guilty. He has called me a saint. And when I believe this, I call myself a saint too. I agree with God when God says, "You are a saint." I say, "Lord, I believe anything you say. If you say that I'm a saint, I'll believe that too."

When we say that we belong to "the communion of saints," the Catholic Church replies, "That's a terrible thing to say! You're not a saint yet. You haven't been cleansed in purgatory. You have to do a lot more good works before you can qualify to be enlisted in the communion of saints." They put a semicolon between "the holy Christian Church" and "the communion of saints." We put a comma there, and say, "I'm a member of the Christian Church and one of God's holy people - spotless, without blemish, without any guilt." But when I say these things all boasting about myself is excluded (3:27) because it is all a free gift given to me by grace.

These verses (3:27,28) are a summary of everything that Paul has said. No man can be justified by the deeds of the law, so we conclude that no man is justified by the deeds of the law. But God has sent his Son "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (3:25). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (3:28). When I say, "I am not guilty" because God tells me so, this is my faith speaking. I accept God's verdict. Thus I am justified by believing God's verdict; I make what he says about me my own.

This is not something new, a new justification that comes into existence all at once when I believe. It's the same statement that God made before I was born. Long before we were born already, God said that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). And how do I make that statement of God my own? Simply by saying the same thing that God says, and by meaning it; by saying, "I'm not guilty." This is the same thing that God said when he raised Jesus from the dead. By raising Jesus from the dead, God justified us. Jesus "was raised again for our justification" (4:25). God said at Jesus' resurrection that the sins of the whole world were paid for. "That's why I let my Son out of the prison. He went into the prison of the grave (TLH 187) after paying for the sins of men." I make God's statement about Jesus being raised for my justification my own by faith. It's not a new statement; you just change the pronouns. Instead of "You are not guilty," by faith I say, "I am not guilty." So I agree with God. Since God is always right, I am right too.

So what comes first, justification or faith? Justification always comes first. Too often we turn this around when we say, "God will forgive me my sins when I become a believer." Then we have a problem with the question, "Am I a real believer?" Sometimes we have our doubts about this. If you don't, I do. When I'm writing a sermon and thinking about what to say to people on a Sunday morning about what God requires of them, the question arises in my mind, "Are you really a Christian? Are you really the kind of person that you ought to be?" Then I wonder if I'm a believer. But then I say, "I don't have to answer that question. I know that Jesus died for me because he died for all men. Since God has forgiven the sins of the whole world (John 1:29; 3:16), I know that my sins are taken away too." My assurance is based on the promise of God, not on something that I've found in my own heart. "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; / All other ground is sinking sand" (TLH 370).

Do you remember how the old confessional service went? We had it before the regular service. The pastor would say, "I now ask you before God, Is this your sincere confession, that you heartily repent of your sins, believe on Jesus Christ, and sincerely and earnestly purpose, by the assistance of God the Holy Ghost, henceforth to amend your sinful life? Then declare so by saying: Yes" (TLH, p. 48). I had an awful time with this after I was confirmed. I never knew if I should say, "Yes," or not. I had another problem because in German it's: "...mit ein lauten jah." So the pastor was saying, "Let's hear a loud (sincere) yes from you." I never quite managed that. I said, "Yes," very quietly because I wasn't sure that I was a believer or that I was sorry for my sins. I used to cry myself to sleep at night wishing that I could be sorry and that I could be a believer in Jesus. I always thought that once you are a believer, then your sins will be forgiven. I never turned this around to: "Your sins have been forgiven; now believe it, because it's so."

In the Bible you are declared to be righteous first, and then you become righteous. You are perfect and holy the day that you become a believer. You are a saint right then and there in spite of the fact that you are still a sinner. A saint is a person without sins. A sinner is a person with all kinds of sins. So a Christian is both a saint and a sinner at one and the same time. That's what Martin Luther said, and it's true. The Bible says that all people without exception are sinners. On the other hand, Paul writes to the "saints" in Rome (1:7), Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1), etc. If they're saved, they're holy people; they don't have any sins.

(Q.) We always use the statement, "Faith alone justifies," but according to James 2:17, faith is not alone. (A.) Faith is not alone in the sight of men. James says, "Shew me thy faith without thy works" (2:18). But you can't do it. What good does it do a man to say that he has faith if he doesn't have any works (James 2:14)? Paul and James are talking about two different justifications. Deuteronomy 25:1 says, "If there be a controversy ... the judges ... shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." Here justification is something that can be performed by judges. One man in an argument will be justified, or judged to be in the right, and the other man will be condemned. Evidently here "to justify" does not mean that a sinner is being declared to be righteous. No, a righteous man is being declared righteous. So justifying is something that can be done by men. For years and years while I was growing up, when I heard the word "justify," I could think only of God declaring a sinner to be righteous.

A man can also justify himself. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for justifying themselves (Luke 16:15). How could anyone do this? A crook who tells the court that he is innocent isn't claiming to be justified on the basis of his works. He knows he's guilty; nevertheless he declares himself to be righteous. So a man can be justified by other men (judges), and he can justify himself.

A man can also justify God. We talked about that last time. When David says that God should be justified when he speaks (Psalm 51:4), what does that mean? It means that when God says something we should say that he is right. When we say that God is right we are demonstrating our faith. Whenever I believe God I am saying that what he has said is right, so I am justifying him, declaring him right. The publicans "justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:29).

"Wisdom is justified of all her children" (Luke 7:35). What does that mean? The wisdom of God is expressed in his Word. Wisdom, personified, says, "I'm the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 2:7). What does the natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14) say about the wisdom of God? "It's foolishness!" But the children of God, the children of wisdom, say that the Word of God is wisdom. So, if an idea comes to you claiming to be wisdom, and you say that it's foolishness, you're saying that it's not right. You refuse to call it righteous, to justify it. "Wisdom is justified of all her children" means that the children of wisdom will say that wisdom is wisdom. In the same way I would justify the believer when I justify him by his works. He says to me that he is a believer. I say, "Wait a minute. I don't know if you're right or wrong. Show me your faith by your works" (James 2:18). When he shows me his works, I say, "Yes, you are a believer." Judging from his works, he is a believer.

Faith is never alone, but what goes with faith never belongs to justification. The good works accompanying faith belong to the doctrine of sanctification. One of the strengths of Lutheranism is that it separates sharply between justification and sanctification. That's where the Roman Catholic Church goes wrong. They are always mixing up sanctification and justification. When you force them to take note of the Bible passages, Catholic scholars will finally admit that "to justify" means to declare righteous. This is so obvious in Scripture that to be honest you have to admit it. But the real definition of "to justify" in Catholic theology is "to make righteous." They always say that God would never say that a man is not guilty while he is still guilty. Therefore, before God can call a man "not guilty," all his guilt has to be

removed by good works. He has to become a sinless person. That's why he can't even go to heaven when he dies, but has to go to purgatory. Then, when he has been purged of his sins, God will be able to say, "You are not guilty." Before God can declare a man "not guilty" he must become not guilty, they say.

We would say that God declares a sinner not guilty, and by the very act of declaration the man becomes what God says he is. When God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), the darkness was dispelled. In the same way, when God says, "You are not guilty," the man, in himself, is exactly what he is; but by virtue of God's declaration he becomes a sinless person in God's sight. There's a change in status, as Professor Meyer always put it, a change in the status of a sinner before God. Not a change in God, or a change in the sinner, really, but a change in the way God looks at a sinner. This is how we try to express it and make it clear. We don't want to press any of these statements too far; otherwise you can end up with ideas that aren't exactly correct.

Before we leave Romans 3:28, I want to say more about Luther's translation, since he added the word, "alone," which isn't in the Greek. The King James translates the Greek correctly. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." But Luther translated: "So halten wir es nun, dasz der Mensch gerecht werde ohne das Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben." And the Latin phrase is familiar to all of you: "Sola Fide." When Luther translated "allein durch den Glauben," this was vehemently attacked by some Catholic theologians. Luther defended his translation, showing how it is in harmony with the German idiom. He says that if you want to talk German you have to add the "allein." He gives all sorts of examples where this is so. Interestingly enough, we have the same sort of thing in Romans 4:9, the King James Version. There Paul asks, "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?" You notice that the word "only" is in italics. This means that there is no Greek word corresponding to "only" here. Since, however, the question ends with "also," the English requires an "only" in the first part of it. You have the same thing in German. Luther had a very fine sense of the idiom of the German language. He said, "This is the way people talk in a sentence like this." Interestingly enough, before Martin Luther's time, the Bible was translated into German by Roman Catholic scholars. One of these translations had "durch den Glauben allein." So Luther wasn't the first to translate it this way. There was also an Italian translation before Luther's time that said, "persona la fide," by faith alone. Stoeckhardt cites these in his commentary. So Luther was only doing what good Roman Catholic scholars were doing before his time. Those translations never became popular, but they translated this passage the way Luther later did.

Then Luther argues another way. Look, he says, the Bible talks about only two ways in which a man can be justified. According to Romans (2:13) a man can be justified by works. "The doers of the law shall be justified." And Romans (3:28) says the "a man is justified by faith." Since Paul has said that works can't justify us (3:20) what's left? Faith. What else? Nothing. Therefore faith must be "alone." So I'm going to translate "sola fide," and if anyone doesn't like it, then let him just say that Luther is going to have it this way. Let them make their own translations if they want to; this is the way mine is going to read. If they're such experts, let them do it in a better way, if they can.

In the King James translation of Romans 3:28, we don't even notice that the "only" isn't there. It's there already in the context. Even the Roman Catholics never said that anyone is justified by anything else except faith and works. They don't know of any other way of being justified. They say that it is by faith and works, but Paul says that justification is by faith without works (3:28). Therefore it is by faith alone. If Paul excludes works, it is manifest that righteousness before God is ours by faith alone.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith (3:27). When we hear the word "law," we always think of the word "commandment." But law can be more than commandment. In the United States we have the right of freedom of speech and we have religious liberty. These are part of the law of the land, but they're not commandments. So sometimes when the Bible talks about "law" it means about the same thing as "constitution." A constitution tells you how things are to be done in a country. So the law of works is the means by which God tells us what is to be done if people are to be justified by works, and the law of faith is that system under which people are justified by faith, by believing in what Jesus has done for them.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?" Under what constitution, what system of salvation? The system "of works?" No. If this were so, there would be reason for boasting, for saying, "I went to heaven because I was so good." We get to heaven because of what Jesus has done. We contributed nothing to this. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (3:28).

"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God..." (3:29,30). A better translation would be: "since God is One." This echoes the Jewish creed, the Shema. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Shema is the first Hebrew word in this creed which, literally translated, would be: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." A Jewish rabbi who lived 200 years after the time of Christ said, "There are three names here; how can three be one?" Today the Jews are unitarian, saying that there is only one Person in God. But this was not the belief of the Jews in the time of Christ. "How can three be one?" this rabbi said. Only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit will we ever understand this.

Here Paul is saying that since God is One he must be the God of all people all over the world. If he's the God of the Jews and of the Gentiles, they must all be saved in exactly the same way. This God has only one way of salvation. He is "one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith" (3:30). You remember the problem that Peter had with eating anything that was not kosher (Acts 10:14). This was a problem for many Christians of Jewish background together with the problem of requiring circumcision (Acts 15:1-31). So Paul is leading up to this truth, that you don't need anything more than faith. "By faith" and "through faith" have exactly the same meaning. Faith alone saves us.

"Do we then make void the law through faith?" Paul is asking, "Can we now set aside the law through faith?" No, the law still stands. God still says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). We still have to tell people why Jesus had to die on the cross. Many Protestants today talk glowingly about the forgiveness of sins, but when it comes to talking about Jesus they don't want to hear about an "old-fashioned blood theology." A bishop of the Methodist Church said, "A God whose forgiveness must be purchased is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Another bishop of the same church said, "We have long since given up the idea of a God who must have his Shylockian pound of flesh before he will forgive sin." A very famous theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, says that God has resources of love that go beyond his justice. What he means is that there comes a time when God stops being just and he just starts loving us. If God would ever stop being just, he wouldn't be God anymore, right? God is perfect justice. So Paul answers his own question: "God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (3:31). God's justice lasts just as long as his love lasts, and God's justice says that every sin must be punished (Galatians 3:10). The love of God says that every sin is forgiven. This contradiction is solved in Christ. Our faith is just this, that every commandment must be kept, but it has been kept for us by Christ. Every sinner has to die, but we have died in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). Christians always need to hear law and gospel.

## ROMANS 4

In Romans 3:21 - 5:21 Paul tells us about the forgiveness of the whole human race. In the first three chapters of Romans (1:18 - 3:20), we learned about the sinfulness of the whole human race. No one can become justified before God by his own works, no one is innocent in God's courtroom, because all are guilty. Having said that, Paul now shows that through Christ all men have been redeemed from their sins. The whole human race has been justified, and this justification is accepted by faith. God says to every human being, "Your sins are forgiven!" This is true, even though only those who believe this find any hope and comfort in it.

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" (4:1). You notice the strange punctuation there, and there's a reason for that. Shift the words around a little and you get, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father hath found as pertaining to the flesh?" This makes it harder at first, but if you study the Bible more it is simpler. Paul is writing to Jews and Gentiles in Rome. Maybe the Jews could call Abraham their father according to the flesh, but the Gentiles couldn't do that. But Paul isn't saying that "Abraham is our father according to the flesh." He is asking, "What has Abraham found according to the flesh?" To understand what Paul means here you have to read Galatians 4:23,29, where Paul uses the expression "after the flesh" or "by the flesh" as a synonym for "by works." Paul asks, "What has Abraham our father found so far as his works are concerned?" That's the meaning of this first verse.

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory" (4:2). The old King James word "to glory" means to boast. "If Abraham our father was justified by works he had something to boast about." Paul had said that boasting is not excluded in justification by works (2:17,23; 3:27). The Jews would argue that Abraham obeyed God when he was circumcised (Genesis 17:9-14,23-27), and Abraham was a just man. Therefore we ought to be circumcised if we want to be just before God. "So we can talk about Abraham," Paul says. "What did he have so far as his works were concerned? If he was justified by works he had something to boast about, but not before God" (4:2). That's not the way it was before God. "For what saith the scripture?" (4:3). "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (4:3; Genesis 15:6). This doesn't say that Abraham was credited with righteousness because he kept all the commandments, though the Bible says that those who obey the law will be justified (2:13). Abraham obeyed some very difficult commands from God (Genesis 22:1-18). Nevertheless, Abraham was justified by faith. He "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

"Now to him that worketh (for his salvation) is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt" (4:4). If a man could earn his way to heaven, he would not be saved by grace. He would be saved by something that he had coming to him, that God owed him. But that's not how Abraham was saved. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth or him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (4:5). "Ungodly" here is an extremely strong word. It is never used in reference to a believer. Wherever it is used in the N.T. it is a synonym for unbelief (2 Peter 2:5; Jude 4,14-18) as opposed to faithfulness. So what does this mean, that the faith of a person who believes that God justifies the ungodly is counted to him for righteousness? What comes first - God's justification or our faith? Justification. So often we turn that around and say that after we become believers God justifies us. The fact of the matter is that God justifies the ungodly, unbelievers. God comes to the whole world and says, "For Jesus' sake, you are not guilty." He tells us to preach the gospel to everyone (Matthew 28:19). When we as unbelievers hear God say, "Your sins are forgiven, you are not guilty for Jesus' sake," how should we respond? We ought to believe it. God's verdict, God's justification is this, that God says to all of us, "You are not guilty." That is God's "glory" (3:23), the praise that he gives us.



When unbelievers hear this, what should happen? They should become believers. And then what does God say? "You are not guilty." When I believe that, my faith says, "I am not guilty." So what is my faith doing? It is justifying me. My faith makes God's statement my own so that I can say, "I am not guilty." I am justified by believing what God says to the unbeliever. That's how it was for Abraham, and he was the greatest hero of the Jews. He was the father of the faithful, the man of whom they said, "We are Abraham's children" (John 8:33). So Paul says, "Abraham was justified by faith and not by works. Don't you want to be justified the same way?"

The second greatest hero of the Jewish people was David. Having shown that Abraham was justified by faith, Paul now comes to David. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (4:6-8). Note here that David doesn't say one word about God imputing righteousness to anyone. But Paul says that David is talking about the man to whom righteousness is imputed without works. In Psalm 32 David says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). Does "covered" remind you of anything? We've already talked about Christ being the "cover," Christ making the covering for our sins. (See pages 47-50). Jesus is our kapporeth (Hebrew), the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17), the one to whom the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) directs us (Hebrews 10:4).

"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psalm 32:2). "Impute" means to charge. "Blessed is the man whom God will not charge with his sins." If a store doesn't charge you for what you take, then you don't owe anything. God should have punished us for our sins. When your sins are not charged to you, you don't owe God anything because of them. It is evident here that as far as Paul is concerned it makes no difference if you say "impute righteousness" or "not impute sin," because it is the same thing. It seems so self-evident that if God calls me righteous he no longer looks upon me as being a sinner. But there are some Lutherans who will argue with you on this and say, "No, when a man's sins are forgiven he's not yet righteous."

When I was a young pastor in Iowa, we used to have conferences between Missouri Synod pastors and ALC pastors trying to settle our doctrinal differences (and they haven't been settled to this day). One day we were discussing the forgiveness of sins and the doctrine of Universal Justification. We finally got the ALC pastors to admit that the Bible teaches that God has forgiven the sins of the whole world. You could hardly get away from that when 2 Corinthians 5:19 says in so many words that God does not count the sins of the world against them. One of the ALC pastors said that he could prove with an example that you can have your sins forgiven and still not be a just person. He said, "You can compare the sinner to a house with blistered paint. It's so bad that you can't paint over it. You have to scrape the wood down to a sound surface before you start to paint. That's how it is with the sinner. When God forgives his sins, he just scrapes off the old peeling paint. But he isn't good yet until he gets a coat of paint, the righteousness of Christ."

That's not what Paul says here. He says that when righteousness is imputed to a man his sins are forgiven. Paul looks at it as one operation. The situation is this, that when God applies that coat of paint to a sinner it covers up all of his sins so that there is nothing there that shows through anymore. The righteousness of Christ is so perfect that it covers up all of our sins perfectly. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," whose sins are forgiven (4:8).

"Cometh this blessedness (of having your sins forgiven) then upon the circumcision only (the Jews, or people who join the Jewish church first), or upon the uncircumcision also? For we (always) say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision" (4:9,10). See, the statement that

Abraham "believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness," is made in Genesis 15:6. There Abraham is 85 years old. The rite of circumcision was instituted when Abraham was 99 years old, in Genesis 17. So if Abraham was counted as being righteous fourteen years before circumcision was commanded, what does that prove beyond a question? That you can be saved without being circumcised, without observing the O.T. ceremonial law.

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised" (4:11,12). Abraham was an uncircumcised believer and a circumcised believer, so he is the father of both. It is obvious from the story that Abraham was a believer long before we are told that he "believed in the Lord" (Genesis 15:6). We don't know how long he was a believer in Ur (Genesis 11:31).

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (4:13). God promised Abraham the land of Palestine, "all the land of Canaan" (Genesis 17:8), but all the land that he ever owned; that we know of, was the field that he purchased from Ephron the Hittite (Genesis 23:3-20). Martin Luther saw this fact as proof that Abraham had to rise from the dead, because at the time that he died he did not own all of Canaan. We don't know what this world will look like after Judgment Day. We know for sure that the whole world is going to be burned up (2 Peter 3:7,10,12), but does that mean that it's going to be burned to nothing, or is it going to be burned like iron in a blast furnace? Some Lutherans believe that when God makes a new heaven and a new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13), he will do this as he created the first universe, out of nothing. Other Lutherans, and I think that they're right, believe that God is going to take the stuff that is all melted down and use that to make a new heaven and earth. Then Palestine will be again what it ought to be. The world will be again what it was at the beginning. All the sins are going to be burned out of it. Nothing will live in it except righteousness, not for 1000 years, but for all eternity.

In Genesis, Abraham and his seed were supposed to receive Palestine. But Paul says that Abraham and his seed were to inherit the world. The seed of Abraham, first of all, is Christ; and God did promise the whole world to him. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2:8). The whole earth belongs to Christ. He says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Someday in Christ's kingdom of glory there will be no unbelievers anymore. The only people in the new heaven and earth will be God's people. This promise was given to Abraham and to his seed, not "through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (4:13)

"For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (4:14). The minute you say, "I'm going to get to heaven by being good," what happens to the gospel? It is set aside. The gospel doesn't set aside the law (3:31), but the minute that you teach salvation by the law you set aside the gospel, the promise. Salvation by grace alone is set aside.

"Because the law worketh wrath" (4:15). Not all Lutheran teachers agree on what this means. Some say that the law works wrath in God, others that it works wrath in man. I don't think that you can say that the law makes God angry, because it's the breaking of the law that makes him angry. I think that the law works wrath in man. When you tell people that God is such a holy God that he demands perfection before he will let anyone into heaven, what do they say? "Oh, that can't be true, because nobody is perfect." But God does demand absolute perfection (Leviticus 19:2; James 2:10). When people hear that they become angry. "A good God would never do that," they say.

"If he makes such demands, then he must be a bad God. A God like that went out with the Middle Ages." Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) said, "That kind of a God is a monster." William Channing (1780-1842) said, "The God of the Bible is the kind of a God in whom we ought not to believe. We could not believe if we wanted to, and if we do we ought to be ashamed of ourselves." That's how the world talks about God. Luther said that when you preach the law to a sinner it's like pouring water on quicklime. The wicked become so much more wicked when they hear the law.

"For where no law is, there is no transgression" (4:15). Every time that this word, "transgression," is used in the N.T. it refers to a sin against a known law. We say that ignorance of the law is no excuse. A person who doesn't know one of the commandments will still be punished for breaking it if he remains an unbeliever. But we can't forget that our Lord Jesus says, "That servant, which knew his lord's will ... shall be beaten with many stripes." And the servant who did not know his master's will "shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12:47,48). God treats a sin much more seriously if the one who commits the sin knows that what he is doing is wrong. (Q.) Is it true that those who did not hear the Word of God will have a lesser punishment than those who heard it and disregarded it? (A.) Yes. But some ask, "Isn't hell the same for everybody? I often use this illustration with my seminary students. Imagine two people in the same hospital room with the same kind of cancer at the same stage of development. But one has a shot of morphine, so he doesn't suffer as much as the other. This doesn't prove anything, but it shows how two people can be in the same situation, and one suffers more than the other.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (4:16). Here again Paul is talking about Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Abraham is the father of all believers, and the promise is sure because it is by grace. The minute you make the promise depend on anything that you do, you raise all kinds of doubts. In fact, if you think of your faith as a work on account of which God forgives you, you have problems. Because if salvation is yours as a result of your believing then you will always wonder if your faith is strong enough. Instead of asking myself, "Am I a believer?" I just ask, "Did Jesus die for me?" I can always say "Yes," to that question because I have God's Word for it. That's why John says, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20).

Billy Graham says, "You've got to be sorry enough, you have to believe and then you'll be forgiven." The fact is that God forgives us whether we're sorry or not. Of course, if we're not sorry, then we won't feel any need for forgiveness, so being sorry is important. The minute you teach that salvation is by grace just as a free gift of God's love, then the promise is sure. When you say that you have to be sorry enough, sorry in a certain way, then all kinds of doubts arise in your minds to make you unsure of your salvation. God's promise is "by grace."

"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (4:17). Abraham isn't just the father of the Jews, the Ishmaelites, the Midianites and the Edomites. He has children of every race in every country of the world. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" (4:18). God told Abraham many times that he would be blessed with descendants (Genesis 12:2; 15:1-5; 17:15-21; 18:10,14). Ishmael was born as a result of Abraham's doubt concerning God's promise (Genesis 16:1-3,15-16). He and Sarah were trying to do something to make sure that the promise came true. That's why in the N.T. Ishmael's birth is an example of attempting salvation by works, and Isaac's birth is an example of salvation without works, by grace (Galatians 4:21-31). When Abraham and Sarah were beyond hope of accomplishing anything by themselves, God gave them a son.

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (4:19,20), giving praise to God. "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (4:21). This shows you what faith is. So often people speak of faith as feeling good. "It feels so good now that I've been born again!" Feeling happy is not faith. It's a result of faith sometimes. Feeling bad is not necessarily a sign of unbelief; it may be the result of something you et. Sybil Leek, the English witch who appears on TV talk shows, said that she always feel so completely happy after she goes to a witches' sabbath. Faith isn't feeling good. Faith is just believing that God will do what he says he's going to do. When God says, "Your sins are forgiven," faith says, "That's right; I believe it."

"And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6). Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (4:22-24). That "if" is not there in the original Greek. Read: "To whom it shall be imputed as believers on him that raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead." "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (4:25). "For" means because of; Jesus was delivered into death because of our sins and was raised again because we had been justified. Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Because he paid for the sins of the whole world, the whole world is declared to be just. Thus Jesus doesn't have to stay dead anymore.

(Q.) When are we declared not guilty? On the day we die? (A.) No, before we were born, when Jesus rose from the grave. What was God saying by letting people become alive on Easter Sunday (Matthew 27:52,53)? That the sins of the whole world are wiped out. This verse doesn't say that Jesus was raised so that some day we might be justified. Our sins were forgiven when Jesus came out of the grave. Somebody asks, "Then why should we pray for forgiveness?" Luther says concerning our prayer for daily bread, "God gives daily bread indeed without our asking, even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to appreciate, and to receive with thanksgiving our daily bread" (Small Catechism). I pray for daily bread because God wants me to, because he wants me to remember every day that my daily bread comes from him. So also when I ask God for forgiveness I ask him to keep on doing what he does all the time. He is always declaring us not guilty, for Jesus' sake.

#### ROMANS 5

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (5:1,2). "Access" means entrance. By faith we have entrance into this grace in which we stand. Think of a room. By faith I walk into that room, and the name of the room is what? Grace. The ceiling, walls, floor, all grace. You live inside God's grace, his love, his forgiveness. I'm always forgiven. You must not think of forgiveness as something that takes place in your life every once in awhile, that you pile up sins for a time and then you get forgiven. You're forgiven all the time.

People say, "I hope I don't die while I'm sinning." People like that don't know what sin is. Of course you're going to die while you're sinning. All of us are far short of what we ought to be all the time (3:23). See, the law tells us how we are to be and not to be, and what we ought to do and not to do. Not being what we ought to be is also a sin. The law demands perfection (Leviticus 19:2). If you're not perfect you're living in sin. But even if you're sinning all the time, you're forgiven all the time. You're living inside the forgiveness of sins. If you die when you're not thinking about Jesus, you still die as a believer.

People say, "I hope that I have a chance to repent before I die." That's not right. The whole life of a believer ought to be one of repentance. (Martin Luther, 95 Theses, 1517). That doesn't mean to feel bad all the time either. See, believing doesn't mean that you feel good all the time, and repenting doesn't mean that you feel bad all the time. Repenting just means knowing that you're a sinner who deserves to go to hell. Being scared to die without Jesus, that's contrition. And faith is knowing that Jesus forgives you all the time; every minute of the day you are forgiven. When you die without having a chance to repent consciously, you still die as a person who knows that he's a sinner and that Jesus died for him. How many times during the day do you think of the fact that  $2+2=4$ ? Did you know that last night when you were sound asleep? You sure did. Did you know it this morning? Certainly. And so I know all the time that Jesus is my Savior, whatever happens to me.

Living in Christ's forgiveness, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (5:2). Here the "glory of God" is the praise that God gives us. Someday when we stand before God, what's he going to say? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). You will say, "But when did I ever do anything good?" He will say, "That's alright, Jesus did it all for you. Well done, you kept all my commandments." So we look forward to Judgment Day when God will say, "You are not guilty." We "rejoice in hope" that that's the way it's going to be. We know it's true now, by faith. Then we'll hear it with our own ears from the mouth of God himself. Now we hear it from human preachers, but then Jesus himself will say it. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed" (5:3-5). In Greek you have "the hope," not any kind of hope, but the hope that we have in Christ. I could tell you, "I have a confident hope that when I get home today there will be a Cadillac in my driveway," but when I get home today there will still be an empty driveway. Then you would ask me, "Was there a Cadillac in your driveway when you got home?" And I'd have to say, "No," and feel like a fool for boasting like that. See, hope makes you ashamed when it doesn't come true, but the hope that we have in Christ is never going to make us ashamed.

"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die" (5:5-7). Would you be willing to die for your country? It would be hard to answer, but finally we would have to say, "Yes, I suppose, if I have to I have to." I wouldn't want to die for communistic Russia. But Jesus died for his enemies. Christ died for all the Russians, for all of us.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (5:8,9). If God sent his Son to die for us when we were sinners, now that we have been justified he's surely not going to let us be lost, right? That God should forgive sinners is an amazing thing; but that God should take saints to heaven, that's not so unbelievable. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (5:10). See how powerful an argument that is? If God did for you what he did in Christ when you were a sinner, certainly you're not going to have any doubts now that he is going to take you to heaven. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (5:11). Our "joy," or boasting is in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (5:12). You know who this "one man" was. Adam. Here we have a powerful argument against the theory of evolution.

So often we think that our main argument is that the Bible says that the world was created in six days (Leviticus 20:11). That is certainly a good argument. But this is one of the main arguments against evolution. According to evolutionary theory, sin has been in the world all the time because death has always been a part of human experience. Evolutionists say that we are descended from animals that once lived in the jungle, stealing from each other, fighting and killing each other. That's normal for animals now. But before sin entered into the world, Adam and Eve were sinless. They weren't vicious animals.

With its doctrine of the survival of the fittest, evolution requires that if there's going to be progress the unfit have to die off. Death has to be in the world all the time for evolution to take place. But Paul says that death did not come into the world until after Adam sinned. As a result of what Adam did, the whole human race became subject to death. Human reason rejects this. It says that if Adam sinned, he should die, and no one else. "The way of the Lord is not equal (fair)" Ezekiel 33:17,20). "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jeremiah 31:29). The children have to suffer for what the fathers did. "That's not fair," says human reason. "Nobody else should die because of Adam."

"(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come)" (5:13,14). Nobody can ever sin again the way Adam sinned, because Adam was a holy person. He started out holy, but we start out born in sin. When a baby is born into this world he is a sinner who deserves to die. But you say, "He hasn't done anything yet!" Nevertheless that child is subject to death before he takes his first breath. Some don't even get a chance to do that. They die. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Our mind and heart rebel against that. When somebody asks, "You mean to tell me that babies are so sinful that they deserve the wrath of God?" what do we have to say? "Yes, that's so." And that makes people mad. "The law worketh wrath" (4:15). The Bible doesn't agree that babies are perfect angels. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," David said by the inspiration of God (Psalm 51:5).

God told Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).. This went into effect when Adam sinned, and every single human being after Adam dies too. You say, "Well, but we are all sinners." That is true, we all deserve to die for our own sins. But first of all, every single human being dies because of Adam's sin. As it stands, Romans 5:12 is incomplete. All die because of Adam's sin - what's the rest of the sentence? "So by one man righteousness entered into the world, and the just shall live by faith" (5:18; 3:28). So Adam brings death into the world and Christ brings life into the world. Adam is the first man, and Christ is the second Adam, the second man, through whom all that Adam did wrong is made right for us.

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift" (5:15). There's a similarity between Adam and Christ, but there is also a tremendous difference. In Adam death comes into the world. In Christ life comes back into the world. "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)" (5:15-17). If Christ came into the world just to make good what Adam had made bad, he would have taken away the sin of Adam, but all our sins would remain. Christ, however, forgives all the sins of all others beside Adam. We get much more from Jesus than from Adam. "In Him the tribes of Adam boast / More blessings than their father lost" (TLH 511:5).

Adam was created holy, in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Martin Luther said that Adam's original righteousness consisted in external perfection and an inward love and obedience toward God "in a pure spirit." To have eternal life, Adam had to keep the commandment of God not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). But Adam sinned, and could be saved only by faith in God's promise (Genesis 3:15). Now, if Christ had balanced exactly what Adam ruined when he sinned, he would have brought us up only to the level where Adam was before he sinned. Then God would say to us, "We'll see if you will be obedient and resist the temptations of the devil." But Jesus doesn't take us only that far. He places us up on a level where we have eternal life even though we cannot keep God's commands perfectly. That's why Paul says that Christ gives us more than we lost because of Adam.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). If you're using the King James Bible, you see a lot of italics in this verse. You know what that means, that the words in italics were added to help the Greek words make a sentence in English. Greek idiom and English idiom are different. In Greek, for instance, you often have a sentence without a verb. We say, "The house is red," but the Greeks could say this without the "is." You find "is" in "This is my body" (Luke 22:19). But you don't find "is" in "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20). What you have here in the Greek is: "Therefore as by the offence of one upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one upon all men unto justification of life."

The RSV is wrong here when it says, "acquittal and life." Any translation that uses "and" is wrong because it doesn't translate what's there in the Greek. God's forgiveness doesn't bring life to those who don't believe it. Faith has to follow justification before it can lead to life. "The just shall live by faith" (1:17).

"Condemnation" means a verdict of guilty. "Justification" is a verdict of not being guilty. Our modern word for justification is acquittal. When a judge says to a man, "You are not guilty," then he's acquitted. Here it is as clear as could be: one man sinned, and all men are declared guilty. In Adam the whole human race sinned, and when Adam's children were born, they were born in his image (Genesis 5:3), sinners like he was. Adam was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27), but when he sinned he and his descendants lost the image of God. Thus all come under God's condemnation.

"The righteousness of one" is the righteousness of Christ. All men are declared guilty because Adam did something that was wrong. All men are declared not guilty because Jesus did what was right. It is true that we are justified by faith. It is also true that God justifies the whole world, "all men." That's why the gospel message should be preached to everybody.

I can go to anyone on earth and say, "Your sins are forgiven." I don't have to ask him first, "Are you saved?" There again you have this tremendous difference between Lutheranism and Reformed theology. Lutherans don't run around asking people, "Are you saved?" We tell people that, and hope that when we tell them they'll believe it. God says you are forgiven, whether you believe it or not. If you don't believe it you're calling God a liar, and you better not do that. If you don't believe God when he says, "Your sins are forgiven," you make a liar out of yourself (3:4). Such unbelief destroys the comfort that comes from being justified by faith. If your heart feels bad, if it says, "You're a damned sinner," you should still say, "But God says that my sins are forgiven." That's what it means to be justified by faith.

If it's true that justification has come upon all men (5:18), then it must be true that men are justified before they become believers, because many people remain unbelievers until the day they die. They go to hell as unbelievers, and through all eternity they won't believe that their sins are forgiven. They'll never have peace with God through faith (5:1). We always say, "If you don't believe, someday you'll

go to hell. You will be condemned." But Jesus says, "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18) because of his unbelief now. If someone doesn't believe that he is justified for Jesus' sake, what's the alternative? That he's condemned by the law, condemned all the time.

People often ask, "If God has really forgiven the sins of all men, why do some people still go to hell?" I've often told my students something like this: You know that I'm going to give you a grade at the end of this quarter. "Judgment Day" will come for all of you. Now one of you does something that makes me very angry. Class comes to an end. I walk out of this door and you leave too and I forget all about what you said or did. But you go home thinking, "Boy, I sure made him angry today, and he's going to give me a bad grade at the end of the quarter." Those thoughts might come very easily, and you would be disturbed by them. You would never know that I've already forgiven you. That's how an unbeliever feels when he thinks about Judgment Day. Unbelief rejects the possibility of God's forgiveness. The worst pain that men can suffer is the pain of a troubled conscience. You can close your eyes to the truth now, as Caiaphas did (Matthew 26:64). You can let earthly things distract you from being concerned about your relationship to God (Luke 16:19-31). But in eternity people will no longer be able to run away from their consciences (Isaiah 66:24). They will experience the full punishment of hell.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (5:19). The whole human race is counted guilty because of what Adam did. Human reason says, "That's not fair." But Paul also says that righteousness is ours "by the obedience of one." If you want God to be fair, that's not fair either, not according to human reason. If one man keeps all of the commandments, just one should go to heaven. But Paul says that one man obeys all the laws of God and all people are declared "not guilty." That's why we are justified by faith. When God says, "You are not guilty," there are only two possible responses. You can believe it, or not believe it. If you believe it, you find comfort, hope, joy and everlasting life in it. If you don't believe it, you remain in your sins.

The Greek word for "made" here means to be "set down," as sinners or as righteous. Because one man was disobedient, the names of all people are set down in God's book of the unrighteous, so to speak. But because one man is obedient, many are set down as being righteous. The Calvinists point to this verse to support their contention that Christ didn't die for all men, but only for the elect. They say that if Jesus died to make "many" righteous that means that he didn't die for all. In the Greek "many" is hoi polloi, "the many." This has even become an English word for the masses. So "many" should really be "the many," the masses. And the previous verse (5:18) tells us that the masses are "all men." When faith trusts in God's free forgiveness, a person's name is entered "in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

I don't know if I talked about the definitions of life and death in our earlier classes. In the Bible God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). But he didn't die. He lived for 930 years (Genesis 5:5). Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians, living people, "You ... were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). It's pretty obvious that the Bible doesn't talk about death in the way that we talk about it. We say that when your soul and body have separated you have died. That's true on one level. Adam died first when he ate the fruit in the Garden of Eden. He died in another sense 930 years later. If he hadn't believed the promise concerning Jesus (Genesis 3:15), he would have died in still another sense of the word. He would have gone into eternal death in hell. That's how the Bible talks about hell, as eternal death and damnation (Mark 3:29; Revelation 21:8).

An old Missouri Synod pastor taught me the definitions of life and death. First he asked me a lot of questions about what I brought up just now. Then he told me, "Life is the enjoyment of God's blessings." That's a fine definition because it fits



right down the line. There are three kinds of life: physical life, spiritual life and eternal life. Physical life is the enjoyment of God's physical blessings. Spiritual life is the enjoyment of God's spiritual blessings. Eternal life is the enjoyment of God's eternal blessings. See, as long as you are physically alive in this world you can enjoy physical blessings. If nothing else, you're still breathing, right? Every breath is a blessing from God. Finally, when you die, you can't see anymore, you can't hear anymore, you can't breathe anymore, you don't have a heart-beat anymore, you don't have a single one of God's blessings left. Physical (temporal) death is separation from the physical (temporal) blessings of God. Spiritual death is separation from the spiritual blessings of God. Eternal death is separation from the eternal blessings of God.

An unconverted sinner, spiritually dead, knows the judgment of God, that those who live as he lives are worthy of eternal death (1:32). Every sinner knows that, but refuses to face up to it. Then the law comes along and makes him even more conscious of the fact that he is guilty. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound" (5:20). Knowing his guilt, the sinner realizes that he is cut off from God's blessings. Even the possession of earthly riches may no longer make him happy. "When the commandment came ... I died" (7:9), Paul says. It made him realize that he was a dead person, separated from God's blessings (Acts 9:3-9, 17-22).

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (5:20,21). When did the promise of God, "Your sins are forgiven," start giving you joy? The moment that you believed it. Before you believed it you had nothing, only death. But when you believed it you became someone who enjoys God's spiritual blessings. This enjoyment of spiritual blessings is your's in this world and when you die. Through all eternity you will enjoy the blessing of knowing that God is your heavenly Father. You will know God again the way Adam and Eve knew him before they fell into sin, when they had real life.

## ROMANS 6

In Romans 6:1 - 8:17 the Apostle Paul talks about the new life of the Christian. All men are sinful, as we have seen, but all men are forgiven. Those who believe in Jesus as their Savior have this forgiveness, and they will now lead a different kind of life than they led before. This is a Christian's response to the gospel.

People think that they're sinning just when they do something bad, but Paul shows us that there is more to sinning than that. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). Paul's word for sin there, in the Greek, means "missing the mark," the bull's-eye. Imagine an archer aiming at perfection, but his arrow falls short of the target or misses the bull's-eye. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Jesus said (Matthew 5:48). So often we think of sin in terms of the archer turning around and shooting away from his target, doing all kinds of things that are bad. Of course, that's sin; but the real nature of sin is failure to be perfect. That's why Martin Luther said that a Christian sins in all of his good works. We sin in our praying, in the way we go to church, in the way we listen to God's Word. Do we ever pray as fervently as we ought to pray or listen to God's Word as fully as we ought to listen to it? Whenever you are not perfect you're missing the mark. It's hard to convince people of this.

When Martin Luther was in the monastery, he was greatly troubled by his imperfections and sins. He spent so much time with his father confessor, Dr. John Staupitz, that Staupitz finally told him, "Don't come back until you've committed some sins." What bothered Luther most of all was that he didn't love God as he should. When Staupitz told him, "Brother Martin, just learn to love the Lord, and everything

is going to be fine," Luther replied, "But father, that's the problem. I can't learn to love the Lord." He wasn't bothered by all kinds of gross sins. What worried him was the fact that he wasn't loving God perfectly (Matthew 22:37). Luther never knew peace of conscience until God showed him in the Word that forgiveness has nothing to do with one's own efforts to please God. Righteousness is a free gift of God's grace and is ours through faith in Christ Jesus.

Roman Catholics say, "If you teach people that they don't have to do any good works to get to heaven, that Jesus has done it all for them, then you're discouraging people from doing good works. People will think that they can live any way they please. What's the use of doing good works if you don't get anything in return?" That last question shows how wrongheaded they still are. If you expect to get something out of a good work, you're doing it for selfish motives, not out of love for God.

People say, "We can't be careless about good works. If you teach people that they are saved entirely by the work of Christ, then they will live any way that they please." I'm inclined to answer, "That's right. If a person is a Christian then he can live any way that he pleases." I wish that I could live the way I please, because haven't we all sung the hymn, "What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me" (TLH 529)? Did you mean it as you sang it? If I really could live the way that I please, then I wouldn't commit any sins anymore. I'd never become angry. I wouldn't act contrary to God's will. I'd live a perfect life. It's pretty safe to say to a person who wants to live a perfect life, "You can live as you please." "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (6:1,2). That's the point that Paul makes here.

Here Paul is dealing with the doctrine of sanctification. The doctrine of justification says that God has forgiven us all of our sins for Jesus' sake. The doctrine of sanctification says that after you have become a believer the Holy Spirit also creates in you a new life, a desire to serve the Lord. Paul had said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20). So that raises the question, "Why not sin as much as you please, since the greater the sins are the better is God's forgiveness?" Paul answers, "God forbid" (6:2). Christians have died to sin.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (6:3). Through baptism we become partners with Jesus; we become a part of this person who died for us. Then everything that Jesus did becomes ours. His death becomes ours too, through baptism. We are baptized into Jesus' perfect obedience and we are baptized into his death. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (6:4). So we are partners with Jesus in his resurrection too. Instead of "by the glory..." I would prefer to say, "in the glory" or "with the glory of the Father."

Before Jesus died, he wasn't "with the glory of the Father." He was "despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). He became so poor that he didn't have a place to call his own (Luke 9:58). He was persecuted, scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns and crucified. He could have come to this world as the glorious Son of God, as he will come on Judgment Day. He didn't have to be born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). He could have done what he did for Adam (Genesis 2:7). But he came into the world as a little child. If he had come in a golden chariot surrounded by 10,000 times 10,000 angels, nobody would have laid a finger on him, right? But then he would not have been crucified. He could have demonstrated his power by coming down from the cross (Matthew 27:42), but he didn't. There was not a lot of outward glory in his life.

The life of our risen Savior, however, is completely different. His enemies can't scourge him anymore, he can't be crucified again, because he is risen in "the glory of (his) Father" (6:4). Paul says that Jesus is "declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead" (1:4). Before the resurrection he

was the Son of God in weakness and humility; now he is the Son of God in power and glory. What made Christ's life such a life of suffering? Our sin. When he rises from the dead, where does he leave our sin? Behind in the grave. Since "we are buried with him" (6:4) in our baptism, we are "dead to sin" (6:2) and "should walk in newness of life" (6:4). Before our baptism we were loaded down with our sins. In our baptism we were made God's children, washed clean of all sin. You are buried with Christ in baptism, Paul says, that you might lead a new kind of life.

Romans 6:4 is the one passage that comes close to saying that we should be baptized by immersion, because when you're pushed completely under water then you really have a death. There are other passages in the Bible that make it clear that baptism wasn't always by immersion. Luther said, "Just as we are plunged under the water, so in that act we are plunged into the grave of Christ, buried with Christ." There are other ways to think of a burial, how it can be compared with baptism.

When I was in gradeschool, we had one teacher in a big classroom full of children. I saw a picture of my schoolmates awhile ago and counted close to 60, but there must have been more because the room was just crowded with kids. And one teacher - but he had a rubber hose! He was the only organist in the congregation, so whenever there was a funeral he had to go over to the church for the service. So we attended every funeral and always sang, "Jerusalem, thou city fair and high, / Would God I were in thee!" (TLH 619) at every service. (I used to hate that hymn.) Then we went along for the burial too, because the teacher had to lead the singing at the grave. The cemetery was next to the church - maybe some who are older among you remember this kind of burial. The pallbearers carried the coffin from the church to the cemetery. Usually there was a pine box in the grave and a pine cover on the mound of earth next to the grave. The teacher would start the hymn, "Nun lasst uns den Leib begraben" (TLH 596), and the congregation sang it. Then the pastor would start reading the order of the burial service while an elder stood by with a shovel.

Before the service, they lowered the coffin into the grave and put the wooden cover down. Then one man would go down and nail the cover to the box. After the service began, when the pastor came to the words, "Earth to earth," he stopped. The elder who had been standing there all the time with his foot on a shovel stuck into the ground then threw a shovelful into the grave. You can imagine what that sounded like when it hit the pine cover. Boom! "Earth to earth." Boom! "Ashes to ashes." Boom! "Dust to dust." Boom! It was a real heart-rending sound; and that's when the women would start crying. You can imagine it too. That's what I think of today when a child is baptized. "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." You don't always have to think of immersion when you compare a burial with baptism.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (6:5). Our baptism was like the death of Jesus, and now we live with him in a new kind of life. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (6:6). When Jesus was crucified, "our old man" was crucified with him, and our sins were punished then. So we no longer want to serve sin, "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (6:7). When once you have died, then obviously you have stopped sinning. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (6:8-10). So in your baptism as you died with Jesus, you also died to sin; and now that you're living, you also live unto God. Here the Apostle Paul is speaking to Christians. You are to live unto God, not because you want to earn your way to heaven, but because that is how your loving God wants you to live. With people like that whose only desire is to demonstrate their gratitude to their Savior, you can say, "Live any way you please

as long as you want to do what Jesus wants you to do." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:11). Through baptism we are dead to sin and alive to God.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (6:12,13). Your "members" of course are the members of your body: your hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc. Don't give them over to sin as tools of unrighteousness. You might compare sin with your neighbor who comes over to borrow your tools. Sin lives next door to you. It comes and says, "I'd like to use your hands today. I want to punch someone on the nose, so I'd like to borrow your fists." If you say, "OK, here they are," you're lending your hands "as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." Or sin says, "I have some juicy bits of gossip to spread and I need your mouth to do it for me." But Paul says, "Don't yield to sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (6:13). Don't forget that you are baptized, that you are now living to God. Let God have your hands to do his work, your lips to say what he wants said; let God have your ears and your eyes too (TLH 400). We do this all out of love for the Savior who loves us. A wife and mother doesn't ask for pay because she worked from morning to night cleaning the house and cooking dinner. We do such things out of love, and that's how we want to serve the Lord too.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14). The law demands a perfect love for God (Matthew 22:37), or else you are going to go to hell. Hearing that, people just get angry (4:15). But when God comes and says, "Your sins are all forgiven for Jesus' sake," after you believe this, does anyone have to tell you, "Start loving the Lord"? No. Luther said, "You don't tell a pear tree to bear pears." It is the nature of a pear tree to bear pears, and it is the nature of a Christian to love the Lord. So we aren't under the law anymore, which means that something outside of us is saying, "You've got to do this." We are under grace. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). If you remember the Luther film, you remember Luther saying, "I almost hated God, or wished that there were no God." Why? Because as long as he thought of God only as a God who will punish every sin, he didn't want to have anything to do with him. This shows how the anger prompted by the law drives some people to atheism.

We spoke of Thomas Huxley (p. 19) who said, "It is amazing what a weight is lifted from a man's heart once he convinces himself that there is no God." That is true. The only trouble is that what he believes isn't so. If you could convince yourself that there is no God, no heaven or hell, that when you die you stay dead and nothing happens after that, then you would have nothing to fear. I wouldn't be afraid of a death that was like a sound sleep in which I experienced no pain. Nor would I have to fear God, or worry about my actions in this life.

You remember what Hamlet said in Shakespeare's play, when he had a knife in his hand and was ready to kill himself. "To be, or not to be (to go on living, or to stop living) - that is the question: / Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune / Or to take arms (his knife) against a sea of troubles, / And by opposing end them. To die... / To sleep - perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!" In other words, Hamlet said, "If I could just be sure that I wouldn't have any dreams after I killed myself, then there would be no question. 'To be, or not to be' would be easy to decide. I could end my miseries with this 'bare bodkin.'" He says, "To die... / To sleep - perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!... / And thus the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. / ...Thus conscience does make cowards of us all" (Hamlet, Act III, Sc. 1, lines 56-60,65,76,84,85,83). (Q.) Was Shakespeare a Christian? (A.) I think so. Some things in his plays give you that impression. I don't know. Many people in England were nominal members of the church at the time. (Note: In Shakespeare's

will we find: "First, I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth whereof it is made." This was probably a pro forma introductory paragraph used in Shakespeare's day.)

Anyway, when I know that I don't have to be afraid of death, when I know that God has taken away all of my sins, then I can start loving this God whom Luther said he almost hated as long as he believed that God had not forgiven him his sins. A Christian keeps the commandments of God because he wants to, not because he has to. That's what it means to be "not under the law, but under grace" (6:4). All he can say is, "I'm ashamed of myself for not loving God more. If only I could live as I pleasē!" (p. 69).

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?" Shall we sin because God doesn't stand over us with a whip anymore to force us to be good with threats of punishment? "God forbid" (6:15). "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (6:16). You're going to be someone's servant, or slave, Paul says. Will you be God's servant, or sin's servant? The old sinful flesh wants you to be sin's servant; that comes in ch. 7. Here a Christian will say, "I certainly want to be God's servant." "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity" (6:17-19). That's the kind of life you led when you were servants or slaves of sin, piling one sin on top of another. "Even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (6:19). This is Christian sanctification.

"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:20-23). That's a remarkable switch too. The wages of sin is death - and the wages of God is life? No. We don't earn the gift of life from God. It comes as a gift. If you were going to earn heaven by doing enough good, life wouldn't be God's gift anymore, but something that you earned by obeying God's commandments. When you work for sin all your life, sin pays you off with death, temporal and eternal separation from all the blessings of God. But when you live for God as his baptized children you have the gift of life. God is the God who punishes every sin, and he is the God who forgives every sin (p. 51).

## ROMANS 7

In this chapter Paul uses another illustration, the example of marriage. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (7:1-3). Death breaks the marriage relationship. We had a relationship with sin, but now in our baptism we died to sin. Our death in baptism breaks the relationship with the old way of life. It breaks our relationship with the law. The law was our ruler, or master. We remember Sarah, who obeyed Abraham, "calling him lord" (1 Peter 3:6). The law was our lord once, but when we died in baptism the old

relationship with the law ended. Since it was broken, we are free to establish a new relationship. So Christ becomes our "husband" (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2). Jesus becomes our Lord instead of the law. Now the law serves us, showing us what is pleasing to God, what a sanctified person can do in his love for God.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (7:4). Just as in the body of Adam all of us sinned, so in the body of Christ all of us died when he was nailed to the cross. "That ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (7:4). Jesus helps us in our sanctified living. "For when we were in the flesh the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (7:5). "In the flesh" means when we were unconverted. To understand "the motions of sins" read "sin in motion," and picture sin sleeping in your heart. Evil desires are there all the time, but they're asleep until the law wakes them up. When you say to a misbehaving child, "Stop that!" you intend that he should stop. But does the law always stop sin? It puts sin into motion. All of us still have some of this perverse human nature in us.

Prohibition was in effect when I was a young man. We never had alcohol in our home except for half a pint of whiskey kept in the pantry for medicinal purposes. If anyone in the family got sick, you didn't call the doctor. You might call the pastor occasionally, when people got really sick. He would have a few prayers with his people and also tell them what kind of medicine to take, usually with Alpenkraut (herbal medicine). It cured everything. When anybody, children or grownups, got sick in our house, what we got was hot lemonade with some honey in it and a spoonful of whiskey. That's the only purpose for which alcohol was used in our home until the time of prohibition. Then my father started making home brew - because the pastor's son talked him into it. We didn't want it before; but as soon as it became illegal it was a pleasure to have, right? Like the woman said, "This would be perfect if only there was some sin in it." The story is often told of a mother who had some beans to soak for baked beans. Before she went shopping she told her children, "Be sure not to put beans up your nose." Dumbest thing in the world to do. They would wonder, "What's so bad about that?" When anyone is told not to do something, immediately the desire to do it arises in the human heart. All God's law does in the unconverted is stir up rebellion and put sin to work. And the fruit of sin is death.

"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (7:6). This statement about the "newness of spirit" and "the oldness of the letter" is misunderstood by so many people when they talk about "keeping the spirit of the law but not the letter of the law." If people come to a stop sign and go through it without stopping because they looked both ways very carefully before they came to it, they say, "I may not have obeyed the letter of the law, but I obeyed the spirit of the law. I made real sure that I wouldn't hit anybody." The fact is that they didn't keep the law in the letter or in the spirit if they didn't stop at the stop sign. (See p. 36) Paul at one time was a Pharisee (Acts 26:5) who was very careful to obey the letter of the law. But his heart wasn't in it; he wasn't doing it because he loved the Lord but because he was trying to earn his way to heaven.

When I was a boy my parents made me go to church. I generally didn't want to go, especially on the last Sunday of the Church Year. I didn't want to hear what the pastor was going to say about Judgment Day and dying. The only reason that I went to church was that I didn't know how to get out of it. You just didn't have a chance to stay at home in my house. If you weren't deathly sick you simply went to church. When I knew that the end of the Church Year was coming, I'd tell my mother, "I don't feel well. I'd better stay home." When the thermometer showed that I wasn't sick she said, "Go upstairs and get dressed." Going to church, I kept the third commandment in the letter, but not in the spirit, in my heart. So also, when you sing praises to God, if you just go through the motions, you're keeping the second com-

mandment in the letter only. When you praise God because you're really grateful that he has made you one of his children, then you begin to sing with your spirit. If you obey any of the commandments only in the letter, you're not obeying them at all. The prophet Jeremiah said, "The days will come ... that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ... I will ... write (my law) in their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:31,33). The law is what God wants. God gives us hearts that want what he wants. "What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me" (TLH 529).

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" (7:7). If the law puts sin in motion, is there something wrong with the law? "God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (7:7). I wouldn't know that evil desires were wrong unless the law told me so. A popular song says, "You can't go to jail for what you're thinking." That may be true in human affairs, but you can go to hell for what you're thinking (Proverbs 15:26). "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Most people don't think of their evil desires as being sins (Proverbs 21:10). People brag about resisting a wrong action: "I sure wanted to do it, but I didn't." But wanting to do a wrong thing is a sin. God's law had to show Paul that coveting (Exodus 20:17) is a sin.

"But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead" (7:8). Concupiscence means lust. "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (7:9). When Paul was a Pharisee he thought that he was enjoying the blessings of God (pp. 67,68). Don't forget that the Pharisees were the best people in town. When we see how Jesus condemned them (Matthew 23), we think of them as being real wicked people. But they were very pious. They never cheated a widow (Matthew 23:14) unless they prayed for her first. They were active in going to their synagogues, in praying (Matthew 6:5), in fasting and giving tithes (Luke 18:12). So Paul says, "I was one of those fellows, happy in knowing that God loved me because I was such a good person. Then the law came, and I died right then and there."

"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (7:10). Regarding the commandments Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). God gave the commandments to show the way to life, but they don't do that for us because in Adam we all became sinners. When the law is preached to us now it brings death, not life. If a man understands the law as he should, the pleasures of this life don't please him anymore. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me?" (7:11-13). Was it the fault of the law that I began to lose all the enjoyment in life that I used to have? "God forbid." It's my fault. "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (7:13). As I study the law, I see myself as a greater sinner all the time. So Christians are more troubled by their sins than the unbelieving world is. An unbeliever can say, "If I lead a good life, if I'm honest, if I try to be good, then God (if there is a God) will be satisfied with me." They don't consider the fact that sin can be in thought and word as well as in deed. Every idle word (Matthew 12:36), every sinful thought (Acts 8:22) is deserving of damnation. When you realize this, things that didn't bother you before trouble you a great deal. In one of his strange remarks Luther said, "I'm not pleased with the stories they tell about Christians who die happily. It's the unbeliever who dies happily" (Psalm 73:3-19). The unbeliever doesn't believe what God says, that he's a sinner who deserves to go to hell. But the Christian is unhappy about his daily sins.

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (7:14). The law wants you to do the right thing for the right reason, with a real love for God in your heart. People will live an outwardly decent life if it's to their advantage. "Honesty is the best policy." Children will behave because they don't

want to be spanked. But once you lead them to want to live the right kind of life, once you've gotten at the heart, then you don't need the law anymore in this sense, to force obedience. That's all the law wants, for people to love God and love their neighbor from their hearts. "The law is spiritual: but I am carnal," Paul says. That is where the problem lies. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (7:15-18). In ch. 6 Paul said what God wants us to be. "Now that you've been baptized God wants you to live a life of service to the Lord." In ch. 7 Paul tells us what we really are. We always have this old sinful flesh that we carry around with us, and because of it we do the things that we don't want to do. We want to please God, but our old Adam is always holding us back. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (7:19-21). A Christian is a person who walks in "newness of life" (6:4). But our sinful flesh prevents us from doing what we want to do - not all the time, of course. I don't think that I lose my temper as often as I used to do. But when you think that you've got one sin licked, there it is back again. We can never be the kind of people that God wants us to be.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (7:22-25). The Christian is always struggling with himself. He wants to serve the Lord, but as he walks along through life his sinful flesh is always drawing him off to one side or the other. So what hope is there for a Christian? Jesus Christ is our only hope. He died for us and rose again. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (4:25). The sins that we commit every day are forgiven every day because they really were forgiven when Jesus Christ our Lord died and rose again. Thus there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).

## ROMANS 8

In Romans 6:1 - 7:6 Paul told us what God wants our life to be like since we have become Christians. In this section, 7:7 - 8:17, Paul tells us what the life of a Christian really is. You want to do what's right, but you can't quite manage it because of your old Adam. So only Jesus Christ our Lord (7:25) can help us. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (8:1). Though we sin everyday, we are not condemned because we are justified by Christ. By faith we made forgiveness our own.

Here the King James Bible prints "Spirit" with a capital "S" referring to the Holy Spirit, but you should have a small "s" here. When Paul talks about the flesh and the spirit he means our old man and our new man which struggle within us. The old man wants to follow Satan's lead, and the new man wants to serve the Savior. So Christians are people "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." But even if you spell spirit with a small "s," it is still the Spirit who is responsible for creating the new man in us. That Paul distinguishes between our spirit and the Holy Spirit is clear from v.16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" (8:16). Just look ahead there. We ought to say, "The Spirit himself," but in the Greek the word for Spirit is a neuter word. English doesn't have masculine, feminine or neuter words, but Greek does. If you understand some German you know that we say, "Der Mann



die Frau und das Kind." Der, die und das is he, she and it in English. Maybe your parents said, "Das Messer (knife), das Kind; die Gabel (fork), die Frau; der Löffel (spoon), der Mann." If a spoon fell on the floor you would say that you would have a man for company soon. In Greek you would use the pronoun "it" to refer to a neuter noun. Since in 8:16 "itself" refers to the Holy Spirit, the Jehovah's Witnesses say, "That proves that the Holy Ghost is not a person." But in John 16:13-15 Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "he," even though according to the rules of grammar the pronoun ought to be "it." So the Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Trinity.

Christians are people who "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (8:1). Though they still fall into sin, the main trend of their life is "after the spirit." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (8:2). Here again it is "spirit." The "law" of my spirit is what my spirit wants, and that spirit is "the spirit of life" because I am alive. I was "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), but through conversion I have become alive, with a new will. I want to do what God wants me to do, not what sin and death want me to do. Now my "members" are "instruments of righteousness unto God" (6:13).

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (spirit) (8:3,4). The law wants to make decent people out of us, but it can't; it can only force you to lead a decent life outwardly. Because of that, whatever an unbeliever does, no matter how good it appears outwardly, it is never good inwardly because it is not "in newness of spirit" (7:6). The law can tell us to love God (Matthew 22:37), but it can't help us at all to do so. But God has sent his Son into this world to keep all the commandments in our place, to die for us, to earn salvation for us. The minute we believe this we can start loving God and start keeping his commandments. So the law is fulfilled in us.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit (spirit) the things of the Spirit (spirit). For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (8:5,6). If you follow the flesh your attention is focused on what the flesh enjoys. Those who follow the spirit focus on what the new man enjoys. "Carnally" means the same thing as "after the flesh;" it's the same Greek word. A carnivore is a flesh-eating animal. To have the attitude of the old man is death, but to have the attitude of the new man is life and peace, Paul says. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (8:7). "Mind" means attitude, and "enmity" means hatred. This very plainly says that the attitude of the unconverted man is hatred against God. We wouldn't know this by observation because there are plenty of people in the world who appear to love God.

Martin Luther tells us in the Smalcald Articles (Part III, Art. 1, "Of Sin") that the corruption of the human heart is so deep that we would never understand it if God would not tell us what it's like. We talked about the people who argue that a loving God would never send anyone to hell (pp. 15,47,61,62). There was an article called "Why Not A Holy Bible?" in the Presbyterian Tribune a few years ago. It suggested that all the stories about sacrifices demanded by God, and all the meaningless butcheries in the Bible be removed. What you would have left would just talk about the love of God. It said that a God who would destroy people in a flood (2 Peter 2:5; 3:5,6) or who would send fire to destroy two whole cities (2 Peter 2:6) could be compared only to Hitler. "Such a God is a revolting God," the author wrote. So Paul is right when he says that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (8:7). Any god whom the unconverted man loves is a purely imaginary god.

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (8:8). I remember getting a letter from the American Cancer Society. It was a plea for funds for cancer research. It started out by saying, "You may throw this letter away if you are sure

that neither you nor any member of your family will ever have cancer." Can you imagine your pastor sending that kind of a letter asking you to support your congregation and the preaching of the gospel among the heathen? Suppose he wrote, "We don't expect you to give a single cent if you're sure that you are going to go to heaven." You'd respond, "Don't you have any love for the rest of the world?" Don't you love the Savior?" When I was a pastor at Sac City, Iowa, they had a Red Feather Fund drive every year, and the newspaper would always have the same kind of an editorial. "Everyone ought to give his wholehearted support to this effort. First, because those who don't give will find out that their names are known. Secondly, we can never know if we will need help ourselves." Can you imagine that? It's really a form of blackmail, telling people that other people will find out that they didn't contribute.

When I was teaching in River Forest they had fund drives for the Community Chest. This was mostly for people who didn't need help, because River Forest is a wealthy suburb of Chicago. The funds were for the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the YMCA and the YWCA. I wasn't enthusiastic about any of those. I used to write out a check for Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown instead. At that time the school faculty was pretty liberal already. The faculty member who was in charge of the Community Chest gift asked me what I was going to give. I said that I wasn't going to give anything, that I had already written out a check for \$25.00 for Bethesda. He said, "That's alright. I won't tell any other faculty members. I won't tell the students." I said, "I wish you would tell them that I don't give for causes such as this. Giving money to support the Boy Scouts is like giving money to the Masonic Lodge." At that time the Missouri Synod as such would not oppose the Boy Scouts, but I was again' 'em. Giving because someone is going to find out if you don't is a rotten reason for giving, isn't it? But it works! It works on the sinful human heart. I think that a Christian would resent such motivation that doesn't start with love for God.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (spirit), if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (8:9). There, for the first time, I would spell Spirit with a capital "S." The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. We are no longer "in the flesh," unconverted. Now "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19). "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (8:9,10). The body, or your flesh, your old sinful nature, is still apart from God. It doesn't enjoy what God enjoys or want what God wants. It's dead because of sin. "But the Spirit (spirit, your new man) is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (8:11). "Quicken," of course, means to make alive. We talked about the definitions of life and death (pp. 67,68). So here too, God is going to make us alive to enjoy his blessings.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (8:12,13). "Mortify" is from the Latin words "to make" and "dead." Instead of feeling any obligation to our sinful old Adam, God wants us to drown him "by daily contrition and repentance" (Martin Luther, Small Catechism, "The Significance of Baptism for our Faith"). That's the way to life. This passage always reminds me of the funeral of a rich man who died, leaving directions that he wanted to be buried in his gold Cadillac. As they were lowering the car with the man's body in it down into the hole, somebody standing nearby said, "That's what I call living!" That's how the world thinks. "I want to live" usually means "I want to have a good time." Carousing, spending all the money that I want to spend on wicked pursuits, sinful pleasures even, that's really living, right? But Paul says, "If that's how you're going to live, you're going to die. If, however, you keep under (1 Corinthians 9:27) those sinful desires, if you crucify them (6:6), then you will live." By losing our life we save it, Jesus said (Mark 8:35).

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" (8:14,15). A lot of people do not live the sinful life that they'd like to live because they're afraid to live that way. "Tam o'Shanter" describes one such person (p. 23). I used to eat lunch with a friend at the University of Minnesota. He was a nominal Roman Catholic who went to church at Easter to keep his membership current, but otherwise he had no religion at all. He used to laugh at me because he couldn't see how any intelligent person would want to be a pastor. He thought that all Christians were pretty much hypocrites. One day he said to me, "Do you mean to say that if you knew that you could get by with it there's nobody in the world that you'd want to kill?" I said, "I don't think that I could kill anybody even if I knew that I could get away with it." He said, "If I knew that the police wouldn't catch me, there are six people on this campus that I'd kill right now. I'd take my chance on eternity." The only reason that this man wasn't a murderer, according to his own confession, was his fear that he'd be caught.

"But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (8:15). "Abba" is the Hebrew word for father. Paul's parents undoubtedly taught him to say, "Abba," just as some of you were taught to pray, "Abba, lieber Vater, Amen." "Father, dear Father, Amen." We learned that prayer in the highchair. Since many of the people in Rome didn't know Hebrew, Paul says it twice, "Abba, Father." We are children of God by adoption, "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). Thus we can really call God our Father, as Jesus teaches us (Matthew 6:9). Explaining the first words of the Lord's Prayer, Martin Luther wrote: "God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children" (Small Catechism, "The Lord's Prayer"). If we're God's dear children, we know that he loves us, and we have an entirely different attitude toward him. We're not slaves who do his will only for fear of being beaten if we don't do it.

We love our earthly parents. We don't obey them only because they're going to whip us if we don't. They do have to correct us once in awhile, because we are sinful human beings. I still remember the old razor strap that hung behind the kitchen door in our house. Sometimes the thought of it was the only thing that made us behave ourselves - but most of the time we obeyed because we loved our parents, right? Your parents took it for granted that you would do what they told you to do. That's how it is now for us in spiritual things. Because we love the Father who loves us, we do those things which the law could never make us do (8:3). When God told us to love him, we couldn't do it. But when God sent his Son to die for us, then we could start calling him "Father," and obey him, motivated by love.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (8:16). (See pp. 75,76). This is an interesting passage in light of the O.T. rule, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1; Deuteronomy 19:15). Here you have the two witnesses: the Holy Spirit and our spirit. My new man tells me that I'm one of God's children, and the Holy Spirit tells me the same thing. People talk about "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." A Mason says, "I'm a child of God because he's the Father of all." He has only one witness here, himself. The witness of the Holy Spirit is: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). So when the Mason or the Scout says, "Even those who do not believe in Jesus are children of God," he is contradicting the Holy Spirit who testifies against him.

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (8:17). Someday everything that God has will be given to us as his "heirs." For now, if we "mortify the deeds of the body" (8:13), we can expect to suffer with Jesus, to lose some of the advantages of this world. We have fine businessmen in our church who might have gone far in this world if they had only joined the Masonic Lodge. But they gave up this chance for advancement so as not to offend their Savior. Or think of what happens when you talk about God's work of creation: "You're behind the times," they say.

Sometime ago I asked a seminary professor at St. Louis, "Don't you believe that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible?" He said, "Nobody believes that anymore." I said, "I believe it." He said, "Nobody who's a scholar believes that." It's not fun to have someone tell you that. I said, "But Jesus said, 'Moses ... wrote of me'" (John 5:46). He said, "What of it? Jesus was a human being; he could make mistakes." They're smarter than Jesus, but we're a lot dumber than they are.

I told you how, at the University of Chicago, I was told that anyone who believed in verbal inspiration was unfit to do any scholarly work (pp. 11,12). I asked the professor, "What do you do with the other Missouri Synod men who study here?" He said "They don't believe in verbal inspiration." I said, "Yes they do; I know some of them." He said, "Then they don't tell you what they tell us." So I mentioned this to one of our men there, and he replied, "Why are you so dumb as to tell him that you believe in verbal inspiration?" In other words, I wasn't going to get anywhere if I confessed my faith. You could probably think of examples from your own life in which, if you didn't go along with something, people would wonder if you knew which side your bread was buttered on. So we see why Paul speaks of suffering with Christ here.

Romans 8:18-39 is one of the most beautiful sections of the Bible. In fact, if you lost the rest of the Bible and still had this section, you'd have the whole way of salvation. You could learn this section by heart and never regret it.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (8:18). That's how Paul saw it. David Livingstone (1813-1873) gave up a comfortable life to bring the gospel to Central Africa. On his first return to England, a lady came up to him after a lecture and said, "Dr. Livingstone, I think it's so wonderful that you would make so many sacrifices to bring the gospel to the heathen!" Livingstone looked at her and said, "Madam I have never made a sacrifice." He gave up a lot of things but never missed them. That was Paul's attitude (Philippians 3:8). Worldly things were meaningless to him.

"For the earnest expectation" (This expression reminds us of how people will stretch their necks to see a parade coming toward them down a street.) "of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (8:19). Right now it doesn't look like we're the heirs of God (8:17) that we say we are. If you saw a ragged person eating bean soup in a tarpaper shack and someone told you, "That's the son of a millionaire," what would you say? "If he is, then he shouldn't be living there and he should be eating a steak once in awhile." The whole creation, Paul says, is waiting for Judgment Day, when God's children are going to look like God's children. A "manifestation" is an appearance. A "manifest sinner" is someone that you can see is a sinner just by looking at him. When Jesus changes us to be like him (Philippians 3:21), then it will be manifest that we are "the sons of God."

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope" (8:20). When did the world become subject to decay? When Adam and Eve sinned, and God said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; ...Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Genesis 3:17). This was a punishment for Adam's sin. Everything in this world finally wears out or dies; as we sing, "Change and decay in all around I see" (TLH 552:2). "All is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). God said that this should be so. You might say that the earth as it was created enjoyed bringing forth fruit for mankind, and that the earth now doesn't enjoy bringing forth thistles. It's because of the curse that everything in this world is subject to misuse. Why? Because the people who use things are sinful. God didn't create aluminum so that bombers might be made and used to kill thousands of people. God created men to live, not to die. But God's whole creation has hope. What is it?

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (8:21). Someday, Paul says, this earth is going to be set free from God's curse. When John describes the new

heaven and the new earth he says, "And there shall be no more curse" (Revelation 21:1; 22:3). "We ... look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). On the basis of this passage (8:21) Dr. Stoeckhardt used to say, "There are going to be animals in heaven too." We can't say for sure, but it could be. Some of you knew Prof. Martin Franzmann in Watertown, Wisconsin. When he was at St. Louis I asked him what he taught on the basis of this verse. He said, "Just this past spring I said in one of my classes that there might be animals in heaven, and afterwards this great big Senior came up to me with tears on his cheeks, and he said, 'I always thought that there was some hope for the animals.'" If "the creature" is going to share in our glory, would that agree with a possibility that it could be burned into nothing? (See p. 61). God's new creation after Judgment Day will be just as glorious as God's children will be.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (8:22). "Travail" is the word for birth pangs. Birth pangs don't result in destruction, but in new life, right? The world's sufferings are the birth pangs out of which something new will come. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (8:23). Our consciences and souls have been set free from the burden of sin, but our bodies, being in this sinful world, still experience suffering. But someday our bodies are going to be "redeemed" and made as glorious as the body of Christ (Philippians 3:21).

"For we are saved by hope" - I would translate that "hope-wise," by way of hope. Since we don't always experience what we would expect God's children to experience, our salvation is largely a matter of hope. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). "But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (8:24,25). In 1 Corinthians 13:13 Paul says, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." That throws some light on this passage. Faith, hope and charity (love) are the three great Christian virtues. Paul says that love is greater than faith and greater than hope. Why does he say that? We'd be inclined to say that faith should be the greatest. But faith will come to an end, because "faith is ... the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). In heaven we'll look at each other and know that we're all children of God. We will see everything that we believe in now.

I remember going to the bedside of a Christian lady who often manifested a fine spirit while her health was failing. One day she said, "The Lord doesn't love me anymore." She'd always been a real happy person, but now she said this. I had a hard time persuading her that the Lord hadn't forgotten about her. In this world it often seems that the Lord has forgotten about us. So now we need faith to believe otherwise. People say, "Seeing is believing," but that's a contradiction. Luther said, "We should not believe that God answers prayer because we see so many prayers being answered. When it seems that God doesn't answer prayer, that's the time to believe. When it seems as though your sins are not forgiven, that's the time to cling to God's Word. Just believe it in spite of the fact that it seems to you that it isn't so." When we see everything in heaven, then there will be no more room for faith.

Hope always looks forward to something better. When we get to heaven we'll have everything that we could possibly want. When Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) wrote his Commedia, he put this sign over the gates of hell: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." That's a terrible sentence, right? He was right of course, there is no escape from hell. But in a certain sense you can say that heaven is a place where there is no hope either. Why? Because there will be nothing more that we could want in heaven. So faith will end in seeing and hope will end in having, but love is going to keep on through all eternity. We can still love each other and love God through all eternity. So "we with patience wait for" what we can't see now.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (8:26). There are times when we are so "down" that we don't know what to pray for anymore. In times of perplexity and sorrow we can be assured that the Holy Spirit is praying for us. Nobody hears such "groanings" except God. The Pentecostalists often say that when they're speaking in tongues they're uttering these groanings, but they're really contradicting themselves because these are "groanings which cannot be uttered." These are silent prayers that the Holy Spirit who lives in your hearts is praying for you when you don't know what to ask anymore. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (8:27). Anything that the Holy Spirit prays for is going to be answered because he asks what God wants for us.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (8:28). This is one of the most wonderful passages in the Bible. "All things" doesn't mean some things, or the good things, but all things. This includes "the sufferings of this present time" (8:18). Everything has to work for good for God's children, "to them who are the called according to his purpose." God's purpose is what he has decided to do. What is that?

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (8:29). That's what God's purpose is for us. This is the first reference to the doctrine of Election which Paul is going to discuss in chapters 9 - 11. "Whom he did foreknow" doesn't mean those people about whom God knew something. Roman Catholics say that God knew which people were going to do good works, so those are the ones that he predestined to salvation. That's not right. And some Lutherans who are not very faithful to the Bible say that God knows who is going to believe, so these are the people whom he has elected to salvation. That's wrong too. "Whom he did foreknow" means those whom God knew as his own, whom he chose to be his own. In Amos 3:2 God says to the children of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Does that mean, "You're the only people that I know something about"? No. God is omniscient, so he knows about every race or nation in the world. In the Bible it says that "Adam knew his wife" and she bore him a son (Genesis 4:25). This means that Adam had sexual relations with his wife, recognizing her and treating her as his wife. So when God says to Israel, "You're the only nation among the nations of the earth that I know," he is saying, "You're the only people with whom I have entered into a personal relationship."

We have some trouble with the word "know" in English because we have just the one word, whereas other languages have more than one word for "know." The Greek language has two words, and the German has two: kennen und wissen. In a popular poem, "Mignon, Johann Goethe (1749-1832) wrote, "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen bluehen?" That is, "Do you know the country where the orange tree blossoms?" He was talking about Italy, which he had visited many times. What he meant was, "Have you ever been there yourself?" If he had wanted to ask, "Do you know something about Italy?" he would have written, "Weisst du das Land..." Wissen means to know something about something. But to kenn something - the Scotch still say, "Do you ken? Do you know?" A cunning person is someone who knows something. If I would ask, "Do you know President Carter?" I would mean, "Have you ever had personal contact with him?" So when God knew Israel as his own people this refers to personal contact with them.

Usually the Bible speaks of Israel as the "chosen" people (1 Kings 3:8). And so here, when Paul speaks of those whom God "did foreknow," he means that God chose them to be his own. These God predestined "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (8:29). What does "predestine" mean? If I would say, "I have destined my son for the ministry" that would mean that I want him to be a pastor, right? I could call it postdestination if I waited to see if he had gifts for the ministry. But God predestined us before he saw anything in us, before he could give consideration to anything that we

had done. God decided that we would be like his Son, "that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (8:29). Like his Son, we also would be able to call him, "Abba, Father" (8:15). God decided ahead of time that we would become his children.

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (8:30). In eternity God decided that we would be his children. He called us through the gospel. He made us his children through faith in Jesus. He forgave us all our sins. He is going to see to it that we will be glorified. So how can "the sufferings of this present time" (8:18) be compared with our future glory? This all fits together.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (8:31). Here Paul is still talking about the sufferings of this present time. People are against you if they call you a coward for not going along with the wrong things that they do. They say you're stupid for believing the things that you believe. But Paul says, "None of that counts if you are on God's side." Everything has to work for your good (8:28). "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (8:32). That's so plain that we can just keep going. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (8:33). Who can say that you are guilty of anything when God says that you're not guilty? Even when your conscience condemns you, you can tell it, "You have no right to say anything, because God for Jesus' sake has declared me to be not guilty." God has justified us.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (8:34). Christ was "delivered for our offences" (4:25). He was condemned for us. So who is going to condemn us again? He was "raised again for our justification" (4:25), so who is going to say that we must be punished for anything? Jesus always cares for us and prays for us. The Holy Spirit prays for us (8:26) and the Son of God is praying for us.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And now Paul names the sufferings of this present time. "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (8:35). Then he quotes from Psalm 44:22. "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (8:36). And now the answer to that question: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (8:37). Here the Greek has a wonderful word which means "super-victorious." "We are super-victorious through him who loved us." When the Apostle Paul was thrown into prison it looked as if his enemies had won. When he was sentenced to die and he was beheaded, he certainly didn't look like much of a conquerer. Nevertheless, he was super-victorious.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38,39). Paul was completely sure of this. If you can say this with the Apostle Paul, then all your sufferings now become pretty light. Because of the love of God for us, we look for "the glory which shall be revealed in us" (8:18). We are sure of this glory because we know that God gave his Son to die for us, and took away all our sins. The only thing that can rob us of heaven is sin, and all our sins have been taken away by Christ. We can be sure of this because he has taken away the sins of all men. By giving us faith to believe this, we are made spiritually alive by our Father. We enjoy the blessings of God right now.

So we have seen how, even though the new life of a Christian isn't what God wants it to be, a Christian still has complete and full forgiveness in spite of his sins. Now in chapters 9 - 11 Paul discusses a really difficult doctrine, the doctrine of Election, the fact that God has from eternity chosen us to be his own.

## ROMANS 9

This is a new section of Romans. Paul has just finished saying that nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ (8:35-39). This brings up the question of what has happened to the Jewish people. If it is true that those who have been elected by God (Isaiah 45:4), chosen by God (Deuteronomy 9:5) - and the Jews were chosen - will never be separated from God's love, then how can you account for the fact that the Jewish race has rejected Christ in large measure? This is the question with which Paul deals in this chapter. As he thinks of these Jews who have not accepted Christ, who have fallen away from the true God, he says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost" - these solemn phrases emphasize the same truth - "that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart" (9:1,2). A heavy weight lies on Paul's heart all the time.

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (9:3). "If such a thing were permitted, I could really wish to go to hell, if only my fellow Jews could be saved," Paul says. This is like the prayer of Moses, when Israel worshiped the golden calf, and God told Moses that he would destroy them and make a great nation of him (Exodus 32:7-14,30-33). Moses offered to be damned himself, if only for his sake God might spare the Israelites. Now this is a difficult prayer to pray. It would be very hard for anyone to say that he himself should be lost so that someone else might be saved. Yet this is the love that Paul had for these Jews - and this is remarkable because it was the Jews who made his life miserable. Ever since Paul had become a Christian the greatest enemies that he had were the Jews. It was the Jews who wanted to kill him in Damascus (Acts 9:23-25). It was the Jew Bar-jesus who tried to stir up Sergius Paulus against Paul at Paphos, on the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:6-8). It was the Jews who drove him out of Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:5-14). Yet Paul says, "I could wish that I could go to hell for their sakes, so that they might be saved." This is a concern for the salvation of others that goes beyond the call of duty. Paul doesn't say that he actually wishes it; he knows that Jesus is the only Savior of mankind. But he says, "I could wish myself accursed for my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites" (9:4).

Now he talks about everything that God has done for these people. "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (9:4,5). The Jews had "the adoption," Paul says. God made them his people, his family, his children, giving them the right to call him their Father (Deuteronomy 32:6). They had "the glory," which has a different meaning here than it has in most of the other places in Romans. (See pages 45,47,48 for comments on "the glory of God.") Here the word "glory" has the same meaning as it has in the O.T. where "the glory of the Lord" (Genesis 15; Exodus 3; 14; 16:10; etc.) appears so often. (See August Pieper's "The Glory of the Lord," Quartalschrift, vol. 52,53.) This bright light in which God made his presence known appeared once in the N.T. when "the glory of the Lord shone round about" the shepherds at Bethlehem (Luke 2:9). The Jews called this outward manifestation of God's presence the Shekinah. This is what Paul has in mind here. Not only were the Jews God's adopted children; they also had God's "glory" among them.

"... and the covenants" (9:4). God made many covenants with the children of Israel. He said that they would be his people and he would be their God (Ezekiel 34:30,31). The promise to send a Savior (Genesis 12:3) was part of God's covenant with Abraham. "... and the giving of the law" (9:4). No other nation in antiquity had what the Jews had: the Law which was given to them on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20:3-17) and the five books of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24-27). "... the service of God" (4:9). This word has the same meaning as when we speak of a church service today. Service means many things in English: a young man goes into the service, someone runs a service station, we get service in a restaurant, some people have civil service jobs, or you can



render a service to someone. In the Greek language you would have many different words for this one English word. The word that Paul uses here refers to the church service that was given to Israel, the Levitical service, the festivals and sacrifices. They had the true worship of God. "... and the promises" (9:4). These were the gospel promises. When you think of everything that God gave to the Israelites, the list of blessings is truly an impressive one.

The Jews had "the fathers" (9:5) too. All the patriarchs from Abraham on were of their race. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Judah - all of these men without exception were Jews. As the greatest blessing of all, Christ came from the Jews "as concerning the flesh" (9:5). He himself was a Jew. This is how richly God had blessed his people who were now turning away from him. So it is clear that if the Jews are not God's people today it's not God's fault. God did more for them than he had done for anyone else on earth. Isaiah told the Jews as much in his parable of the vineyard which the Lord had planted (Isaiah 5:1-7). God made a vineyard, Isaiah said, planting the choicest vines (the Jews) in it, building a fence (his protection) around it, and building a watchtower in it so that it would be guarded against all those who would damage it. But when he came to pick grapes in his vineyard, God found only wild grapes. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" God asks. You could ask the same question here. What more could God do for the Jews of Paul's time than he had already done? They had every advantage, even the Savior coming from their own race "as concerning the flesh" (9:5). According to his human nature Jesus is a descendant of the Jews. According to his divine nature he is "the only begotten Son" (John 1:18) of God, "begotten of his Father before all worlds."

Romans 9:5 is the verse I always look up whenever a new Bible translation comes out. If this verse is translated correctly I am sort of sympathetic toward the translation. That's how Phillips misled me for a long time, because Phillips translates it correctly: "The patriarchs are theirs, and so too, as far as human descent goes, is Christ himself, Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever." The RSV (Revised Standard Version) botches it up: "To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever." (A footnote in the RSV reads: "Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever.") One of the great Greek scholars of our time, A.T. Robertson, wrote a grammar of the Greek N.T. which is at least fifty times as big as the N.T. itself. He says that you can tell what a man's theology is by the way he translates Romans 9:5.

I told you that there are no punctuation marks in the Greek. If we translate 9:5 word for word, this is what the Greek says: "Of them is Christ according to the flesh the one who is over all God blessed forever." That's a literal translation. The article "the" here is extremely important. There is a rule in Greek grammar that when a noun is followed by an article, the phrase governed by the article is often attributive. It modifies the noun as an adjective. So if you read this normally you get exactly what you have in the King James translation; you don't have to have punctuation marks at all. The RSV divides this verse with a period, making two sentences out of it. This is not a normal way of translating; it doesn't follow the rules of Greek grammar very closely. If you use only commas in this verse, the deity of Christ is most plainly taught. The sad thing about the RSV is that this is what it does to almost every other passage in the N.T. where the deity of Christ is plainly taught. There are only two places in the RSV where the deity of Christ is taught more clearly than it is taught in the King James version, and both of these are in the Pastoral Epistles, which modern scholars generally say aren't written by St. Paul. That's how they can say that by the time these epistles were written the deity of Christ was generally accepted, but it wasn't accepted by St. Paul. In the epistles that they agree Paul wrote they retranslate and repunctuate in such a way as to get rid of the doctrine of the deity of Christ in the passages which very definitely teach this doctrine. One of the clear passages from the Pastoral Epistles is Titus 2:13. In the King James this reads: "... the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ..."

The RSV has it better: "... the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. The King James translation sounds like "the great God" and "our Saviour Jesus Christ" are two persons, but the RSV makes it plain that "great God" and the "Savior Jesus Christ" refers to one person. But in Romans 9:5 the King James translates and punctuates in a normal way, and thus teaches the deity of Christ.

"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect" (9:6). You see, most of the blessings that were given to the Jews were part of "the word of God." The promises, the giving of the law, and the covenants were part of "the word of God," and the adoption was ratified by "the word of God." God gave them his Word; "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (3:2), the Scriptures. Didn't it do any good that God gave them such great blessings? Paul says, "Don't draw that conclusion. You should remember that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (9:6). In other terms you might say, "Not all church members are church members." Not every Jew was a real Jew. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly" (2:28,29), Paul said. And in chapter 4 he said that Abraham is "the father of all them that believe" (4:11), whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised. If they don't believe, they are not the children of Abraham. So here Paul says it again. Not every Israelite is an Israelite. Though the Israelites were the chosen people of God, not every member of the chosen people of God is himself one of the chosen ones. Not all of them were people whom God "did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (8:29).

"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (9:7). When the Jews talked about being children of Abraham, whom did they include in that term? Just the descendants of Abraham's grandson, Jacob, who was called Israel (Genesis 32:28). The Jews were the descendants of Jacob, yet they said, "We be Abraham's seed. ... Abraham is our father" (John 8:33,39). If you had been there to ask them, "Do you count the Ishmaelites as the chosen people? what would they have said? "No." "How about the Edomites?" you would ask. "No, sir! The Edomites are terrible people (Numbers 20:14-21), we don't want anything to do with them. Why, the whole book of Obadiah is written against the Edomites. It's only one chapter, but it's all against Edom. So they don't belong to God's chosen people." So you ask, "What about the Midianites (Numbers 31), are they part of God's chosen people?" "No." "But they're all the children of Abraham, and you said that the children of Abraham are God's people. Don't you know your O.T. history? Abraham had a lot of sons." The Ishmaelites were descendants of Ishmael (Genesis 16) the first son of Abraham, but they weren't part of God's chosen people. Isaac was the second son (Genesis 21:1-8). Abraham's sons by Keturah were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah (Genesis 25:1,2). You can cross out all but Isaac (Genesis 25:6). "But aren't Isaac's descendants all God's people?" Paul takes that up in v.10.

"That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (9:8). This particular thought, "children of the flesh" and "children of the promise," St. Paul develops in great detail in Galatians 4:21-31. I asked you to read that section as part of your preparation. This is one of the epistle lessons for the church year that I never preached on during the early years of my ministry because I never quite knew what to do with it. Paul uses the story of Ishmael and Hagar on the one hand, and Isaac and Sarah on the other hand, in an illustration or allegory of the doctrine of salvation by grace and salvation by works. I could never catch on to what Paul was driving at until one year the whole thing became very clear to me all of a sudden. It's really very simple when you study the O.T. story (Genesis 16). Abraham came to Palestine when he was seventy-five years old. That's when God promised that he would become "a great nation" (Genesis 12:2). He didn't have any children, so how in the world could he become "a great nation" without a single son? But he believed God's promise and, no doubt, came to Palestine hoping that one of those days he would have a son. After ten years, Abraham was 85 and Sarah was 75, and they decided that this just

couldn't go on. God had said, "Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth" (Genesis 13:16) and "like the stars in the sky" (Genesis 15:5). So finally Sarah said to Abraham, "We're going to have to take some drastic measures, or the promise of God will never be fulfilled. You know what the custom is in the land from which we came." (Today we know from the code of Hammurabi, 1800? B.C., and the Nuzi tablets that if a wife had no children of her own she could give one of her handmaidens to her husband as a second wife. Any children that the slave girl had would be counted as the children of the wife and would be the heirs of this couple.) So Sarah thought that this would be the solution to their problem. They wanted the promise to come true, so they were going to do something to help it come true. As a result Ishmael was born. They had helped God along. But there was a conflict even before Ishmael was born (Genesis 16:4-6), and later God told Abraham to accede to Sarah's request, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son" (Genesis 21:9-13).

Abraham and Sarah had to wait some more, until he was 99 years old and she was 89. God told Abraham, "Ishmael is not the son that will inherit the promise; I will establish my covenant with Isaac, who will be born a year from now" (Genesis 17:18-21). As you know from our discussion of Romans (4:19), Abraham and Sarah were past the age of having children (Hebrews 11:11,12). "It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" (Genesis 18:11). But that's when God gave them a son, Isaac; and it becomes clear that this is the son which is the result of God's promise. See, Ishmael was born because of what they could do. "But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh" (Galatians 4:23). This means "by works," as we saw in Romans 4:1 where St. Paul asks, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" Ishmael was born because of what Abraham and Sarah did in an attempt to make God's promise come true. Isaac is the son of the promise because it is clear that he was born only because God gave them a son. Of all the sons of Abraham, there was only one son, Isaac, who was given to him by a special act of grace. And Romans 4:11 tells about all the other children that God gives to Abraham by a special act of grace: the Gentile believers. God "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (4:17). If you want to know who the real children of Abraham are, you listen to what God says. God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12). God's promise was, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). So today Abraham is "the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11). These are the children of Abraham that God really promised (Matthew 3:9, John 8:33-59).

"For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son" (9:9). This is from Genesis 18:14. "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works; but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (9:10-13). Up to now, you might say that there was a good reason why Isaac was chosen. Ishmael and the other sons of Abraham weren't sons of Sarah. So Isaac was the real son. But in the second generation Isaac has two sons, Esau and Jacob, twins born to one mother, Rebecca. Moreover, Esau is older than Jacob (Genesis 25:24-26). Before they were born God said, "The elder shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23). In other words, God selected the younger son, Jacob, to carry on the Messianic line. So once more you have an election. Of all the sons of Abraham one is chosen. Of the two sons of Isaac, Jacob is chosen. This goes on throughout O.T. history. Jacob had twelve sons, but the ten northern tribes (1 Kings 11:30-36) simply go out of the picture (2 Kings 17:1-23) before the O.T. even comes to an end. And by N.T. times all the children of Abraham are called Jews (1:16; 3:1; see pages 50,51) because by then the chosen tribe was Judah, though not all the Jews in the N.T. were of that one tribe.

The tribe of Judah was chosen already at the time of Jacob's death; he had said that Judah should be the tribe from which the Messiah would come (Genesis 49:10).

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This word, "Shiloh," is hard to handle because as it stands there it isn't translated into English. You can point the Hebrew consonants with different vowels to get different meanings here. The RSV translates, "... until he comes to whom it (the scepter or ruler's staff) belongs." So the scepter will belong to Judah throughout eternity, because it is going to be given to whom it belongs (Christ). Judah was selected to be the ancestor of the Christ. Throughout the time of the O.T. there was a process of selection going on. Many of the Jews stopped being descendants of Abraham; they were simply absorbed into the Gentile world and disappeared. God was selecting out of the descendants of Abraham those people who were really his.

The choice between Esau and Jacob was made long before they were born, before they had "done any good or evil" (9:11). "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (9:11). Why was Jacob chosen? Because God wanted it that way. That's all that we can say.

Sometimes people have trouble with these words: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (9:13). Commentators have wrestled with this and tried to get rid of the meaning of these words. They don't like to have it stand that God hated Esau because they say that God doesn't hate anybody. It is true that God doesn't hate anybody when you're preaching the gospel. But God hates everybody when you're preaching the law. Some commentators say that "hate" means "to love less." God loves Jacob more; he loves Esau less. Well, that doesn't help you much. What are you going to do with passages such as John 3:16? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ..." Does God love some people in the world more than others? This would be a good Calvinistic interpretation. A Lutheran ought never to admit that God loves one person less than another, because God loves all men so much that he gave his only begotten Son to die for them. Christ died for all men; he has no less love for Esau than he has for Jacob.

John Calvin (1509-1564) got around the problem of God loving some people and hating others by saying that for some people God has "special grace" which is strong enough to convert a man, whereas "common grace," just ordinary kindness, is not enough to convert a man. But the Bible says that God hates not only Esau (9:13), but "all workers of iniquity" (Psalm 5:5) as well. Whom does that include? Who is a worker of iniquity? Every single person on earth (3:12). "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth" (Psalm 11:5). Concerning Ephraim God said, "... there I hated them ... I will love them no more" (Hosea 9:15). But then he says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). If you're looking for a contradiction in the Bible, you ought to pick on this one. In the same book where he says "I will love them no more," God says, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?" (Hosea 11:8). That certainly indicates great love, doesn't it? God doesn't want to do what he says he's going to do - which he also wants to do to them, because nobody forces God to do anything.

(Q.) God loves Jacob according to the gospel, and hates Esau according to the law? (A.) Yes, that is what I was going to say. You're way ahead of me already. Maybe it isn't necessary to explain this in detail then. I always get a big argument from my students when I say that God hates all sinners. They say, "Oh, no, that isn't true. God doesn't hate sinners; he hates the sin." I say, "Give me a passage in the Bible that says that God 'hates sin.' I believe that's true, but I don't know of any passage that says that. But I do know of several passages in the Bible that say that God hates the sinner." There's Psalm 5:5; 11:5; Hosea 9:15; and Malachi 1:3, "And I hated Esau," which Paul quotes here (9:13). On the other hand, the Bible tells us that God loves all sinners. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:8). So God hates all sinners, and God loves all sinners - the one is law, and the other is the gospel. And the two are brought together by the cross of Christ.

When you hate something you shove it away, you don't want it. If you love something, you want it. God hates sinners; he pushes them away "into outer darkness" (Matthew 22:13). God loves sinners; he wants them to be with him in heaven (Matthew 25:34). Now how can he do both? Because of the cross of Christ Jesus. He took and pushed his own Son away - for us. He hated his own Son, you might say. That particular statement isn't in the Bible; but the Son of God said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Try to fit that together with the perfect love of the Father for his Son (Luke 3:22; John 15:9,10). If the Father loves his Son, how can he forsake him? You might ask that question. Because God hates all workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5), and Jesus was "numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). He becomes one with the people whom God hates. God himself "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). He counted Jesus guilty of all the sins of the world. Because Jesus suffered this hatred of the Father in my place, I can find comfort in the love of God. It is only when I believe in the vicarious atonement of Christ Jesus that I can believe both of these things: that God pushes the sinner away, and that God pulls the sinner to him. God pushes him away in hatred, and God pulls him to himself in love.

When God says, "Jacob have I loved" (9:13), this is a proclamation of the gospel. It doesn't mean that God doesn't love Esau. God wanted Esau in heaven too. We don't even know if Esau was lost, or not. When Jacob returned from Mesopotamia, Esau met him with kindness (Genesis 33:1-15). When Isaac died, "his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Genesis 35:29). Thus there is reason to suppose that Esau repented of his sins and was accepted back into the covenant with God. Certainly he was reconciled with his brother Jacob before he died (Genesis 36:6-8). But the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob hated each other, being enemies all through the O.T. period. The Edomites did not share in the blessings given to the Israelites (9:4,5). They remained under the law, you might say. As a result of living under the law they joined all the people whom God hates. By their unbelief (apparent in their opposition to Israel - Numbers 20:14-21; 2 Samuel 8:14; 2 Chronicles 20:10-12,22-24; 25:11,12,14,15) they cut themselves off from the love of God. Because they rejected the promise of God which is offered to all nations (Genesis 22:18), there was nothing left for them but the hatred of God (Isaiah 34:5,6; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Malachi 1:4). In that sense then Esau is hated by God; his descendants came under the wrath of God which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (1:18). So let the words say what they say. Don't try to explain them away, to make them logical to human reason, by saying that "hate" means "to love less." You'll find the solution to the problem in the cross of Christ.

Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother ... he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Lenski has a fine discussion of this in his commentary on St. Luke's Gospel (pages 785,786). He says that you shouldn't soften the true sense of "to hate," but you should remember that "this hating is the same as that which is exercised by God." Lenski is a good Lutheran there. When the Bible says hate it means hate. It means that if your father or mother or anyone else tries to stand in the way of your service to Christ, your discipleship, then you must be ready to push them away. When you do this you are manifesting toward them what we call hate.

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid" (9:14). Whenever you start talking about this doctrine of election, the first question which usually arises is, "Is that fair, that God should choose one and not the other? Is this right? What about the poor people in Africa who never had a chance?" St. Paul doesn't enter into an argument at all. He just says, "God forbid," that we should say that he is unfair. Jesus dealt with this question, "Is God being unfair when he does good things for some people, but not for others?" What parable was that? The parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). Jesus said that a farmer went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He promised to give them all a penny, the standard wage for a day's work. He went out a little later, at the third hour, and hired some more men, but he didn't say what he would pay them. "What-

ever is right I will give you." He went out again at noon and at three o'clock to hire more men. Then he went out at the eleventh hour, five o'clock in the afternoon, to hire some more. "Whatever is right you will get." When the time came to pay, the farmer gave every man a penny. First he paid the men who had worked for one hour - they had to stand in line the shortest period of time. Was that fair that they should receive a whole day's pay? What's unfair about it? The people who came and worked all day long said that it wasn't fair. "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." But the owner of the vineyard says, "Didn't we agree this morning that you would work all day for a penny?" The people have to answer, "Yes." "So, you have your penny," he says. "But the other people got more even though they worked less." But he replies, "Can't I do what I will with my own? What's unfair about that?"

Actually, I think that most of us still feel that this isn't fair. It doesn't feel right to me. But find some argument against it. If, out of the goodness of my heart, I gave one of you \$5.00 today, would I be right in doing this? Would any of you have the nerve to ask me for \$5.00 too? You ought not - do you want to be beggars? I can do what I want with what belongs to me. I pay my bills. Whatever I have left over I can pass out as I see fit. Now if God pays his bills, what's everybody going to get? Everybody is going to be lost, right? (Romans 6:23). If somebody gets what is coming to him, is that unfair? You see, what we are complaining about is that some people should go to hell. If you want to talk about any unfairness at all here, you might say that what is really extraordinary is that some people should go to heaven. If you insist that God be fair according to your idea of fairness, then you have to agree with this: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). If we all get what's coming to us, no one is going to be saved. But the remarkable thing is that some people are saved. Why are they saved? Because God is good to them. This is what Paul means when he says, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (9:16).

Before that St. Paul quotes the words of God to Moses (Exodus 33:19). "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (9:15). This simply means that if anyone is helped it is because God has been good to him. If anybody goes to heaven, it is because God has been gracious. "So then it is not of him that willeth" (9:16). If a man gets to heaven, it won't be because he first wanted to get there. "... nor of him that runneth" (9:16). It won't be because he tried hard to get to heaven. "... but of God that sheweth mercy" (9:16). God was good to him. This is the doctrine of election. Why am I a Christian? Because God wanted me to be a Christian.

Some years ago a member of the Missouri Synod who had belonged to a number of other churches wrote an article for the Lutheran Witness. The title was: "Why I am a Lutheran." He told how he had been born a Catholic, but became dissatisfied with the Catholic religion. Then he joined the Methodist Church (I think that was the one), but he wasn't satisfied there because they didn't follow the Scriptures. He joined the Episcopal Church. While he liked the service, he said that he missed the pure preaching of the gospel as he had learned it from the Bible. Finally, after several other changes, he became a Lutheran. "Now, for the first time, I feel that I have found the place where I belong." He finished the article with the original question. "Why am I a Lutheran? Because God willed it." This shows a very fine understanding of the doctrine of election.

"Why am I a Christian?" Not because I wanted to be one; not because I tried hard to be one; but because God in his mercy made me one. "Why am I a believer?" Not because I wanted to become a believer, because "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (8:7). The things of God are "foolishness" (1 Corinthians 2:14) to the natural man. I became a Christian because my parents took me to a baptismal font when I was nine or ten days old and had me baptized. I didn't ask that this be done for me. I didn't work for this. It was the pure mercy of God. This is the point that Paul makes

here. Why are some people children of Abraham? Because God makes them to be children of Abraham. Not just because they are born from Abraham, because of natural descent, but because God has chosen them.

"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (9:17,18). In English this isn't so obvious, but you have a different use of the word "will" here. "I will go downtown" is a future tense meaning: "I am going to go downtown tomorrow." But the word "will" isn't only an auxiliary verb; it is also a real verb that stands on its own feet. God wills that all men should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) could also be: God wants all men to be saved. "I will go downtown tomorrow" expresses the same thought, showing a real desire. "I've made up my mind to do this." In Greek the word is thelo, or ethelo, to be willing, to wish, want or desire. In 9:15 you have the future tense: "I'm going to have compassion (future tense) on whomever I have compassion" (present tense). The King James translation misses this change in tense twice in that same verse.

In 9:18 you have this other construction: "He has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens those whom he wants to harden." There "will" expresses desire. Just think of what this means. It sounds like Calvinism, double predestination, doesn't it? When you talk about predestination, don't forget that the word is predestination. To destinate means to decide that something is going to happen, and to predestinate means to decide beforehand that something is going to happen. The Calvinists always say that in eternity God made up his mind that some people were going to heaven and some people were going to hell, and he chose some people just for this purpose. He picked out certain people and said, "These people I'm going to save." And he picked out other people and said, "These people I'm going to damn." That's the Calvinistic doctrine of double predestination. The International Critical Commentary, written by people with a Calvinistic background, says that there is no hint of double predestination in this verse. And why not? To understand this it would be better to start somewhere else.

If I were to ask you, "Does God want to damn anybody?" what would you say? "No"? I don't know if you all would say this or not; but the Lord really does desire to damn people. (See page 58). Otherwise you would have to say that God sends people to hell when he really doesn't want to do it, that somebody forces him to send people to hell. If that were true, that would imply that God is not almighty, that there is a god above him. Usually people don't think of it as a god above God, but that the law forces God to do this - as though God had to be obedient to the law too. But what is the law? It is the holy will of God, what God wants. In the law God tells you what he wants you to do. He also tells you what he wants to happen to you if you don't do it. He says, "You're going to be cursed" (Galatians 3:10). So when God sends any man to hell, why does he do that? Because he wants to. Then you ask, "Why does he want to?" Because man has been wicked. Does anybody remember from Doctrine I last year what the technical term for that will of God is in dogmatics? ... We talk about the antecedent will of God and the consequent will of God. God wants to damn men because they have been wicked, as a consequence of their wickedness. So God wants to save men because they have been good? No - that would be a consequent will too. The will of God to save men is an antecedent will. When God wants to damn somebody, it is because of what he (the person) is. When God wants to save somebody it isn't because of what the person is, but because of what he (God) is. So the will of God that desires the salvation of all men (1 Timothy 2:4) always flows from the heart of God directly; and the will of God to damn somebody is always a result of man's wickedness. If you keep this in mind, you can understand this verse, "He has mercy on whomever he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden" (9:18).

But then you ask, "What is the place of human conduct in this verse?" If you would say that the first part of 9:18 depends on right human conduct (as Roman Catho-

lics do), then of course you have false doctrine. If you would say that human conduct has no place in the second part of this verse (as the Calvinists do), then you have the opposite false doctrine. If you would say that God from eternity chose some people on whom to have mercy just because he wanted to be merciful, and that he resolved to damn others without any reference to their bad conduct, then you would have Calvinism. If you would say that God has mercy on whomever he wants to have mercy because they are good, while hardening those he wants to harden because they have been bad, you would have Roman Catholicism. But if you say what Paul says here, you'd be a good Lutheran. Just don't go any farther than Paul goes! This is true: God has mercy on whomever he wants to have mercy (9:18). If anybody is saved it is because God wanted to save him. But God wants to save him out of pure mercy and grace: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (9:16). On the other hand, if a man is hardened or damned, it is because God wanted this to happen to him - but only because the man is impenitent and unbelieving, so that he has only himself to blame for this. Paul discusses this in the following verses.

Why did God want to harden Pharaoh? Because he refused to listen. When God told Pharaoh to let his (God's) people go, he replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:1,2). So God hardened his heart. At first Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15,32), but then it changes and God hardens Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12; 10:1, etc.). Why? Because Pharaoh first hardened his own heart. So if God wills the damnation of a man, the cause must always be found in what the man did. But in the salvation of man the cause must never be found in what the man did. In both cases something happens which God wants, but in the one case it results from man's wickedness, in the other from God's goodness.

"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" (9:19). If that's the way it is, that God's will is done in both cases, then why does God find fault with anybody? Paul does not again enter into any kind of logical debate here. He simply says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (9:20,21). Even if it were arbitrary, you ought not criticize God, because God has a perfect right to do what he wants to do. A potter can divide a lump of clay into two parts. He uses the first part on his potter's wheel to turn out a flower vase. Later he covers it with glaze and fires it in a kiln and sets it in a place of honor in the house. Meanwhile he takes the other clay and makes a garbage can to set behind a door somewhere. This is a vessel "unto dishonour." And the clay has no right to criticize what the potter has done. If we talk to Calvinists, we shouldn't say, "God couldn't do anything like that." The same argument could be used against you when talking with someone who denies the fact of eternal damnation altogether. "A good God couldn't do anything like that." Human reason might back them up, and not you. But God doesn't act arbitrarily, Paul says.

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory...?" (9:22,23). This is very important for understanding all that we have said up to this point. Paul could have written: "...vessels of wrath afore ordained" (not "fitted") "to destruction...and...vessels of mercy afore ordained unto glory." Who teaches that? Calvin. Read it another way: "...vessels of wrath fitted to destruction...and...vessels of mercy fit" (not "afore prepared") "for glory." Who teaches that? Roman Catholics. They say that wickedness fits people for destruction and good works fit people for glory. As it stands (9:22,23), St. Paul is a good Lutheran. You're fit for destruction because of what you have done; but you're glorified because of what God has done. So Paul is neither a Roman Catholic nor a Calvinist. But he is a man who says, "If a person is lost, it is because he is fit for it; if he is saved, it is because he is ordained for it by God."



"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (9:24). We saw already how, of all Abraham's children, only Isaac was the son "of the promise" (9:7,8). Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:21-26). Esau became the ancestor of the Edomites, enemies of Israel. That left Jacob, whom God named "Israel" (Genesis 32:28). But "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (9:6). So God wanted Gentiles to be "vessels of mercy" (9:23) also. "As he saith also in Osee (Hosea 2:1), I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (9:25). The Jews boasted of their physical descent from Abraham, but that meant nothing to God when so many were unfaithful to him. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel (Isaiah 10:22,23), Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (9:26-28). God said that only a handful of Israel would be saved. A lot of Israelites are not God's people, but a lot of Gentiles are God's people - and all because of God's mercy.

"And as Esaias said before (Isaiah 1:9), Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha" (9:29). If God had treated Israel the way they deserved to be treated he would have destroyed them (Genesis 19:23-25). But God left "a seed," a remnant. A great majority of them were lost because they rejected God's grace. But the others weren't saved because they accepted God's grace; they accepted God's grace because he made believers out of them. This is what we must keep in mind, that when a man accepts God's grace it's never because of what he wants, but because of what God wants.

God knew that most of the Jews would reject him, but he said that he would save "a remnant" (9:27), "a seed" (9:29). There is a wonderful parable implied here even if Paul doesn't spell it out. Nowadays farmers buy certified hybrid wheat seed at a seed store. But when I was a boy on the farm we had a fanning mill that separated the heaviest kernels of grain from the rest of the grain. So in the granary we had a box just for this seed grain. The rest of the grain was sold or ground to make flour; it was "fitted to destruction" (9:22). But the seed grain was "prepared" (9:23) for seed. The Jewish farmer had to save some of his wheat for seed too. In the same way, God kept "a seed," a little part of the people of Israel, for himself.

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness" (9:30,31). The Gentiles who weren't looking for righteousness found it. Why? Because God gave it to them in his grace and mercy. And the Jews, who wanted to become righteous by the good lives that they led, failed - because it was never really good enough to be what God expected of them. "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written (Isaiah 8:14;28:16), Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (9:32,33). The Jews stumbled at the stumblingstone of Christ. Why? Because before you can believe in Jesus as your Savior, what do you have to believe about yourself? That you are a sinner in need of forgiveness. And the Jews were too proud of their own self-righteousness. When the gospel said, "Here's the Savior for sinners," they replied, "That's not the kind of Savior that we need. We want someone to rid us of the Romans." That's why Jesus called himself "the stone which the builders rejected" (Matthew 21:42-46). So the Jews who kicked Christ out of the way were lost because of unbelief.

But for us our crucified Savior is everything. Why do we read, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10)? Because only at the cross are justice and mercy perfectly fulfilled - justice when unbelievers get what they deserve, and mercy when God makes a believer out of someone.

## ROMANS 10

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (10:1,2). You might keep this passage in mind the next time you hear someone say, "As long as you're serious about your religion everything is going to turn out alright." Like the Jews that Paul talks about here, the Jehovah's Witnesses are zealous, but don't have the truth. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (10:3). They were still trying to make themselves righteous by their own good works.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (10:4,5). Jesus told a certain lawyer (Luke 10:25-28) what God told Israel (Leviticus 18:5) - by obeying God's commands heaven is yours. Just make sure that your obedience is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Soon enough people realize that this is impossible, so they say, "God expects only that we should do the best we can. After all, nobody is perfect. God wouldn't expect you to be what you can't be." So they try to "establish their own righteousness" (10:3), but it is never the righteousness of the law which requires perfection in everything.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)" (10:6,7). What was the purpose of Christ's humiliation and exaltation? He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (4:25). When he did that he accomplished everything necessary to save us, right? So if you try to earn your own way to heaven, if you insist on saving yourself by your own good works, you're doing something foolish, trying to do all over again what Jesus has already done. "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (10:8,9). Everything has been done for you; just believe it.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10:10-13). Salvation is free for everyone. People will still say, "But God doesn't want some of those people to be saved." That's wrong. The "whosoever" in John 3:16 means everybody. And here Paul says, "whosoever believeth," and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10:11,13). So if someone is lost it's never because salvation wasn't there for him. There's always something in the person, some fault of his own resulting in his damnation.

The next verses you know very well. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written (Isaiah 52:7) How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (10:14-16). People say that the reason some people don't believe in Jesus is that they haven't heard of him. "The poor heathen in Africa, they haven't had a chance to hear the gospel." Paul says the problem is that they don't obey the gospel. The Pharisees certainly heard it. Even the unbelievers in America know that the Christian Church teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for our sins on the cross. Today there are Christians who talk about their Savior all over the world. People hear the gospel; they just don't believe it. Paul's word "obey" here means to believe.

"For Esaias saith (Isaiah 53:1), Lord, who hath believed our report?" (10:16). Isaiah was one of the greatest O.T. preachers. What does his question imply? That few people listened to him. They had the gospel! They didn't believe it. So you can't answer the question, "Why are some people saved and other people lost?" by saying that it is because some people haven't heard the gospel. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (10:17-19). In v. 18 Paul quotes from Psalm 19:4, and in v. 19 from Moses' song in Deuteronomy 32:21. (Comments on "jealousy" are found at the end of Romans 11:11).

"But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (Isaiah 65:1) (10:20). God is always found by people who aren't looking for him. Don't people look for God? Sure. But they want a false god, someone who will reward them for being as good as they can be. They want someone who won't send anybody to hell. They don't want a just God. That's why Martin Luther says, "The natural knowledge of God always leads to idolatry." If you tell people about a God who loves them so much that he sent his own Son to die for them on the cross, they say, "That's a lot of foolishness" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Since people keep trying to make a god in their own image, if they do find the true God (who was actually finding them) it is when they aren't looking for him. If we're saved, it's because God has been good to us. You can't draw any more conclusions such as: "I was saved because I wasn't so stubborn; I didn't resist so much."

"But to Israel he saith (Isaiah 65:2), All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (10:21). The Israelites had everything. They had the gospel. They had God's revelation in all its fulness. They had the glory, the covenants, the service of God (9:4). They had everything that God gives people to make believers out of them. They heard the words of God inviting them to come, but they didn't come. You know what "gainsaying" means. It's an old English word for contradictory. It means saying the opposite of what is said to you. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands" to you, God says to Israel. When you hold out your hands to a child, he knows that you want him to come to you, even if he is too young to say anything. When you hold out your arms like this, the child will either come to you or else turn away. If he turns away, he's a "disobedient and gainsaying" child. Even if it was your own grandchild, how long would you stand with your arms out like this? All day long? Finally, if the child won't come, you give up and wait a few months before you try it again. But God stands there all day long with his hands out toward Israel. He wants his people to come to him, but they turn away. Is Israel lost because God predestined them to damnation, because God didn't try hard to save them? You just try holding your hands out like this for half an hour. I'm getting tired already. So if the Calvinists say, "The unbelievers are lost because God didn't want them," Paul says, "God wanted them all." He tried so hard, but they didn't come. So if they're lost, it's their own fault. If they're saved, who gets the credit? God. And if the Gentiles are saved, God gets the credit too. They are just as bad as the Jews, but they are saved because God is gracious to them. In his poem, "The Deserted Village," Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) talks about people who came to church to laugh at a preacher of the gospel. "And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray." God found Paul too, didn't he (Acts 9:3-6)?

#### ROMANS 11

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (11:1). What would you finally expect God to do with "a disobedient and gainsaying people" (10:21)? When a child doesn't come to you, you turn away. But did God cast away his people? No.

Paul was disobedient, a persecutor of the church, and yet God saved him. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not (don't you know) what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying (1 Kings 19:10,14,18), Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (11:2-4). Elijah thought that he was the only one in Israel who was still faithful to the true God, but God told him that he had preserved a remnant for himself. So Paul says, "That's how it is now." In Paul's time, when most of the Jews were turning against the gospel, there were still many of them accepting it. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (11:5,6). This last line about works was probably not in the original text. It was because of God's grace alone that he chose Israel to be his people, and his grace alone was the reason for a remnant of Israel being preserved.

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (11:7). As long as the Israelites were looking for righteousness by their works they never found it. Jesus' enemies remained "blind guides" (Matthew 23:16), "blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14). "(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day" (Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10). "And David saith (Psalm 69:22,23), Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway" (11:8-10). In other words God says, "If you don't want my salvation, then you can't have it." Finally, they are rejected by God because they rejected him. And if others are saved, is it because they don't reject God? No, it's because he is gracious to them.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?" Did God intend that they should fall? "God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (11:11). Did God put the stumblingstone of Jesus (p. 92) in front of the Jews because he wanted them to fall on their faces? No. He wanted them to be saved. But God had something good in mind for them even when they fell. Do you remember where Paul started preaching whenever he arrived at a new town? Except at Philippi (Acts 16:13), Paul went to the synagogues, to the Jews in town first. What do we look for in a new town? Wisconsin Synod people, right? Paul would preach for a few weeks and have a few converts, but then usually the great majority would turn against him and drive him out of their synagogue. Paul told the Jews in Antioch, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). Humanly speaking, if the Jews had all been willing to listen to Paul, he would never have gotten around to the Gentiles. But because the Jews rejected the gospel, it came to the Gentiles. And what did Paul hope would happen when he went to the Gentiles. He hoped that the Jews would become jealous. If a child gets tired of playing with a toy he'll kick it into a corner and not look at it. But when his brother comes along and starts playing with it, what does he say? "That's my toy! Give it back; I want it!" In all of this, God's will is that people should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). God still wanted the Jews to be saved even after he rejected them because of their unbelief.

People often criticize our Lutheran Church for not getting into English work fast enough. There may be some justification for this criticism, but why didn't the first missionaries who came from Germany get around to learning any English? Because they had their hands full just serving the German Lutherans. Way back in the middle 1800s, a seminary graduate would get a call to serve the Lutherans in northwestern Iowa. So he would come out on a train and get off the train at the first station in

northwestern Iowa. He would go to a beer tavern and ask, "Is there any Tchermans living here?" Someone would tell him, "Yes, north of town." So he would set out, five or six miles on foot, find the place, knock on the door and say, "I'm a Lutheran pastor from Germany. Do you have any children to be baptized or instructed? I'm ready to have a worship service; do you have any neighbors here who are Lutheran?" So they would gather the Lutherans there and he would preach to them. Then he would get back on the train and go to the next station and walk out into the country again to find the Germans. So some of them never had a chance to learn English because they had their hands full just serving the German Lutherans.

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (11:12). The Gentiles came into the church in rich numbers because the Jewish converts became fewer and fewer. So if the fall of the Jews was such a blessing to the Gentiles, wouldn't the conversion of many Jews be an even greater blessing to the Gentile world? The conversion of a Jew is usually a tremendous boost for a Christian congregation, giving the people a greater zeal for missions. And it is real interesting how converted Jews have contributed to the Christian Church out of all proportion to their numbers. One of the best books ever written about Jesus' life was Alfred Edersheim's Life of Christ. He was a converted Jew. Some of the most beautiful church music was written by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), a converted Jew. August Neander (1789-1850) wrote one of the best histories of the Christian Church. He also was a converted Jew. So when Jews are converted to Christianity, they are a blessing to the Gentiles, as Paul says.

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them" (11:13,14). Paul was trying hard to convert as many Gentiles as possible so as to make the Jews all the more jealous, hoping that thereby some might want the gospel for themselves too. Here we see that the congregation in Rome was made up of Gentile believers as well as Jewish believers (2:17; 4:1). The spiritual father of all Christians is Abraham (4:11). We should remember the background of these Roman Christians when we get to ch. 14, concerning weak brothers.

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches" (11:15-18). Here Paul compares the church, God's people, to an olive tree. The roots go back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). The branches are individual Jews, but now most of them are broken off by unbelief. The Gentile believers are the wild olive branches grafted in to make a full olive tree again. Is this something for the Gentile believers to boast about, as if, for instance, they didn't resist the grace of God as much as the Jewish branches that were broken off? No. "But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith" (11:18-20). If Jewish branches were broken off of the olive tree, the reason was unbelief, and nothing else.

"Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (11:20,21). We all have a tendency to be proud because we are members of the Christian Church. So don't forget that your connection to the root is everything. If you start to say, "I'm better than others," you're on the way to unbelief. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to

nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (11:22-24). In other words, Paul is never going to lose hope for the Jews. Some of them, some living today, are people who are God's elect, a remnant. God still stands with his hands stretched out to the Jews. He loves them in spite of their rejection of his grace. So don't stop trying to make Christians out of them; some will be saved.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (11:25). Paul says, "Let me tell you something that you wouldn't know otherwise." It looks as if all of Israel has rejected the gospel, but this "blindness" is only "in part." The Jews remain the hardest people in the world to convert; a few are converted, one or two at a time. When one is converted, it's a boost for the congregation that he joins. But the convert may experience terrible persecution. I knew a converted Jew in Chicago. He told me that his father and mother, whom he loved very much, had not spoken a word to him since he and his wife became Christians. They wanted nothing to do with him. He said, "When my father sees me coming down the street, he spits and crosses to the other side. When my mother sees me, she simply turns around and looks the other way." And yet that man was a faithful member of a Christian congregation.

In his Interpretation of Romans, R. C. H. Lenski writes, "What Stephen said in Acts 7:51 will continue to the end" (p. 721). Before he was martyred, Stephen told his accusers, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Lenski points out that in this chapter Paul refers to similar situations in Elijah's time and in his own day: a few Jews are always saved from among the great majority of those who reject God's grace. Paul's "mystery," then, has to do with the future. Until the end of time Jews will exist as a separate people opposed to the gospel; nevertheless there will always be a few in every age who will be brought into Christ's kingdom of grace.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written (Isaiah 59:20,21; 27:9), There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (11:26,27). In his Popular Commentary of the Bible, P. E. Kretzmann warns us regarding a false interpretation of "all Israel shall be saved." He writes, "There is here no basis for the millennial dream of the final conversion of all Jews, but the apostle speaks of Israel in the same sense that he has employed almost exclusively in the entire letter ... While the fulness of the heathen is being gathered for Christ, ...souls will also be gained from the midst of the Jews. Until the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ in His glory, therefore, there will always be some from the midst of the self-hardened Israelites that will come to the knowledge of the Savior. And thus the final result will be that all Israel will be saved, all those that are in deed and truth the children of Abraham, not according to the flesh only, but according to the spirit" (N.T. vol. II, p. 62). (See Romans 9:6-8). "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Lenski: "God does not contradict himself by treating the hardened mass in its last generation as 'beloved' after having treated the previous hardened mass of many generations as accursed" (p. 734).

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (11:28,29). Kretzmann: "This saying sounds so self-contradictory that Paul adds a further word of explanation" (p. 63). "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (11:30-32). Kretzmann: "God may well do for those that are now in the depths of unbelief ... what He did for us, and thus bring them" to Christ (p. 63).

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (11:33). The original Greek means "his footsteps are untrackable." If you've seen some Western movies, you saw Indians who could tell you how many cowboys had gone through a certain place on horseback, and what kind of horses they had, just by looking at the footprints, right? They could follow those footprints right along until they caught up with the people they were tracking. But sometimes the trail ran out on solid rock where it couldn't be followed. This is what Paul has in mind here. God's footprints run out on solid rock. You can follow him a little way, but you can't track him down. Of course, we are talking about following the ways of God with our mind, understanding what God is doing, really seeing the whole picture fully and completely so that every loose end is tied up. You just can't do that with God's ways. We're always going to run into problems that we can't solve with our human reason and which God hasn't answered for us either. God has told us what we need to know to get to heaven. God has told us what we need to know to be sure of the forgiveness of our sins. But there are a lot of times when people ask, "Why does God do it this way?"

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (11:34-36). "Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psalm 115:3). We believe that. But our human reason troubles us. God chose the children of Israel in the O.T. to be his own people, but now, says Paul, they have rejected the gospel. Why? Paul says, "We can't answer such questions." Why does God deal as he does with mankind? We just don't know. All we know is what God has told us.

## ROMANS 12

In Romans 12 - 15 Paul discusses practical questions of Christian life. We say that the first eleven chapters of Romans are the doctrinal section, and the last chapters are the practical section of the book. In English when we talk about something as being "practical" we usually mean that it is useful. We're not saying that here. What we are saying is that in these chapters Paul deals with Christian practice, how God wants Christians to live with one another and what their attitude is to be toward the state or toward the weak brother. These are some of the questions to be taken up in these chapters. We could say that the first section of Romans is practical too, because there's nothing more useful, more necessary to us, than hearing that Jesus took away the sins of the whole world, that all men's sins are forgiven.

Paul begins by drawing a very close connection between the Christian life and everything that has been discussed so far. "I beseech you therefore" - I beg of you, on the basis of all that has been said so far about mankind's sin and God's forgiveness - "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (12:1). A note on your outline sheet calls attention to the fact that the word "service" here means a worship service. The Greek language has a lot of words that are translated with the English word "service." If on a Sunday morning you say, "I'm going to the service at ten o'clock," the word is latreia. If you take your car to a service station, or wait for service at a restaurant, the word for this is diakonia. This is the word that the English words "deacon" or "deaconess" come from. The word that Paul uses here is latreia, meaning reverential service or worship.

"I want you to present your body as a living sacrifice." The main feature of O.T. worship was the sacrifices. All the great festivals were celebrated with sacrifices. Every day in the temple worship started and ended with a sacrifice (Exodus 29:38-44; Psalm 141:2). Now Paul says, "I want you also to have a service in which you bring a sacrifice, not the body of an animal, but your own body, a living sacri-

face. This is your reasonable service." Here "reasonable" does not mean logical. It would make a lot of sense to say, "Since God has done so much for me, I ought to do something for him," but that's not what Paul means here. When Paul talks about a "reasonable service," he means a service that takes place inside your mind and heart. The Greek for "reasonable," logikos, refers to man's inner being. So much worshiping is just outward form, going through the motions. The worship that God wants from us is the worship of our hearts. God wants us to take our whole selves and give ourselves to him in our worship. Our bodies we lay on the Lord's altar and dedicate to his service. And don't forget that Martin Luther said once, "The morning and evening sacrifice that every Christian brings to God is the sacrifice of his reason."

God wants a Christian to view his whole life as one long worship service. We begin our service "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This happens when we are baptized, when we renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways, as we say in the "Order of Holy Baptism." So your lifetime service starts like every worship service, in the name of the Triune God. Then it goes right through to the time when you sing your own Nunc Dimittis at the end of your life. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace" (Luke 2:29). God wants everything between our baptism and the time that we leave this earth to be one long church service for God's people. "Pray without ceasing," Paul said (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In the O.T. you had times set aside for worship services and festivals. But God said that after the Messiah came his people would worship him "from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another" (Isaiah 66:23). The worship of God in N.T. times never ends. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Our life is one long service.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (12:2). Don't be like worldly people. If you are Christians, you are different from what you were before. Your mind has been changed; you think differently about sin and about God. This is just another way of saying that "the Holy Ghost ... has enlightened me with His gifts" ("The Third Article," Luther's Small Catechism). Because God has made us think differently and feel differently, God wants us to act differently. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). "As (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

So that's the general introduction. We strive to live a holy life because of the mercies that God has shown us. The people who teach that we are saved by good works say, "We lead a holy life so that God may be merciful to us, so that God will reward us." You have the right words here about a holy life and God's mercy, but those who want to earn God's favor put them in the wrong order. Paul teaches this order, that since God has been merciful to us, we want to render a real service to him; we strive to worship him with our whole life.

Romans 12:3-16 gives us a long list of directions for Christian life in a congregation. I'll make some brief comments, and you can ask questions if you like. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (12:3). Don't be conceited or proud. Don't forget that you're a sinner who has been saved by grace, and you don't have a great deal to be proud about. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office" (12:4). We would say, "the same function." Our hands and feet, eyes and ears, etc. all serve different functions. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (12:5). Paul talks about how the different parts of the body serve each other in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. That's the idea here; we serve each other as members of the body of Christ.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith" (12:6). This isn't



very clear English here. It really means: "Our preaching is always to have a right relationship to the Christian faith," the Christian doctrine. The Christian faith is what Christians believe; we believe what the Bible teaches. If somebody would preach that Jesus is not true God, as many modern preachers do, then you would say that his preaching didn't have a right relationship to the Christian faith. In the Apostles' Creed we confess, "I believe ... in Jesus Christ, ... who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." If someone says that he doesn't believe in the Virgin Birth, we would have to say that he doesn't have a right relationship to the Apostles' Creed, to the Christian faith. So the gift of preaching means more than the gift of gab, more than being able to stand up and talk for twenty minutes or however long the sermon should last. Besides being understandable, sermons should have a right relationship to the Christian faith. So, preach true doctrine.

"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching" (12:7). If anybody is particularly good as a teacher, that's the work that he or she ought to do. The word for ministry is diakonia, meaning service; a minister is a servant. Sometimes we forget that and think of a minister as being a boss. But he is not a pope; he's the congregation's servant. He's the shepherd of the flock, but he's also the minister of the flock. He is to do what the people want him to do, in this sense, that he does what they know God wants them and their minister to do. If "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45), that means that he came to serve, not to be served. The word diakonia here reminds us of the first deacons who were elected to serve the poor and to see to it that the widows were not neglected (Acts 6:1-6). So Paul is saying, "If anyone's gift is to do this charity work as a deacon or a deaconess, then let us wait on our ministering."

"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity" (12:8). If someone is good at encouraging fellow believers in Christian activity, let him do that. The primary meaning of "simplicity" is singlemindedness; then it can also mean generosity. The opposite of giving with simplicity would be giving with duplicity, doublemindedness. An example would be giving with the hope that you might get something for yourself, maybe your name in the paper. Or you may give something because it is good for your business. (See p. 77). The result of such an attitude is that you will give as little as you can get by with without hurting your business. But if you give because you want to help, then you will be generous.

"He that ruleth, with diligence" (12:8). If you have an office with responsibilities in the congregation, see to it that the work gets done. "He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (12:8). I think that every pastor has had members in a congregation who were always ready to give and never failed to give, but first they complained about it. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The Greek word for "cheerful" there is interesting; it's hilaros. The Lord loves a hilaros giver, a hilarious giver, someone who has the time of his life giving away his money. That's showing mercy with cheerfulness. You're happy about it, not complaining.

"Let love be without dissimulation." The Greek here is anupokritos, unhypocritical. Don't just pretend that you love people. God wants you to love them from your heart. That's your "reasonable service" (12:1). If you just love people outwardly, your worship service (p. 99) is just a matter of form. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (12:9). Hang on to what is good, and hate whatever is evil. I think that we might remember that Christianity is a religion of love - but it is also a religion of hate: Christianity hates everything that is bad, right? God wants a Christian to oppose and not tolerate everything that is evil.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (12:10). Let the other fellow have the glory; let him be ahead of you. That's awfully hard to do. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (12:11). Don't be lazy in the things you're busy in. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (12:12,13). When the saints are needy, when certain things are necessary to their daily life, then believers help them with their needs. "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (12:14). We don't find it so hard to feel sorry for our fellow Christians when things go badly for them. It's a lot harder to bless those who are persecuting you. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (12:15). It may not be so hard to feel sorry for someone. But when things go awfully well for people, then there is a tendency to become jealous of them. "Rejoice with them!"

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (12:16). Don't focus your attention only on those things that are important in this life. One of the nicest things that I ever heard about a fellow pastor was that it made absolutely no difference to him whether a member of his congregation was rich or poor. Whether his church members were ordinary people or prominent members of the community, he treated them all alike. That is the attitude God wants us all to have. This is the end of the section dealing with our life in a Christian congregation.

The next section deals with a Christian's relationship with people in general, with the unbelieving world, people who may not belong to a Christian congregation. "Recompense to no man evil for evil." If people are persecuting you, making life miserable for you, don't pay them back with the evil they do to you (Matthew 5:39). "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (12:17). Be honest in your life before the rest of the world.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (12:18). Paul recognizes that sometimes you will not be able to live in peace. We have no right to live at peace with those who ought to be punished. We have no right to live peaceably with false teachers. Martin Luther was often accused of destroying the peace of the church. "That's right," he said. "Before the Reformation everything was peaceful in the church. If we had been willing to remain silent, there would have been as many false doctrines as there are fleas on a dog in August, and everything would have been peaceful. But," he said, "the doctrine is not ours, but God's. When God wants a certain doctrine to be preached, we ought to preach it. If that destroys peace, then that's not our fault." We don't have a right to make peace under such conditions. That's why he says, "As far as your own self is concerned, you don't fight for your rights. But you certainly should not let God suffer anything. You shouldn't let the church or the gospel suffer anything." Just remember to use the one weapon that God supplies: "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). "With might of ours can naught be done" (TLH 262:2).

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (12:19). The quotation is from Deuteronomy 32:35. If somebody does something bad to you, don't try to get even. "Give place unto wrath" doesn't mean to put your anger away. You have the same phrase, "give place," in Jesus' parable about the places at a wedding dinner. Jesus said, "Don't sit in the highest room, because it might happen that somebody else who is more honorable than you has been invited, and the host will come to you and say, 'Give this man place,' and you begin with shame to take the lowest room" (Luke 14:8,9). "Give place" means to let someone else have your place. Let wrath ("the wrath" in the original), God's wrath, operate.

Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, "When someone hits you on the one cheek, turn the other also" (Matthew 5:39). Is he saying that the fellow who goes around punching people should never be punished? No, just that you should not be the one to take revenge. "For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (12:19). God is saying, "I'm going to straighten that out. When I punish every sin, I'll punish that sin too. You won't have to do it."

There's a remarkable story about a Missouri Synod parochial school teacher in Louisiana. In his class he had two children, a boy and his sister, who weren't members of the congregation. One day he caught the boy drawing dirty pictures on his slate, and he spanked him. This was the son of the town druggist. That evening he walked home past the drugstore. This was near the Gulf of Mexico, so every building had steps going up to the front door because of the danger of floods. The druggist was standing outside and said, "Would you come up here?" So he did. "I understand you spanked my boy," the druggist said. "Yes, he deserved it," the teacher said. "He drew some dirty pictures on his slate." The druggist said, "For something like that you spank him?" And he punched him in the nose, knocking him off the steps backwards so that he rolled in the dirt in the street. The teacher was a big fellow. He grabbed a stone and started up the steps toward the druggist. And, telling this story, he said, "I heard the words in my ears just as if they had been spoken out loud, 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, for I will repay.'" He dropped the stone and went home to the place where he boarded.

A lot of longshoremen lived at his boarding house. "What happened to you?" they asked when they saw his black eye. He told them, and they said, "You say the word, and after dinner we'll go down there and tear the place to pieces." He said, "No, I don't want you to do that." They asked, "Why not, are you yellow? We'll go with you." But he said, "No, the Bible says, 'Avenge not yourselves ... I will repay, saith the Lord.'" They just laughed at him. He went upstairs to his room knowing that they thought he was a coward. Later that evening a lawyer knocked at his door. He said, "I've been trying to get something on that druggist for a long time. I hate him. You sue, and I'll handle the case for nothing." "No," the teacher said. "But it's legal," the lawyer said. He was tempted to do it, but he told the lawyer what the Bible said. So the lawyer got mad at him because he refused to sign a complaint.

Soon after this the teacher accepted a call to St. Louis where his sister kept house for him. Each morning she put the newspaper next to his breakfast plate, but one morning it wasn't there. He found the paper on the front porch folded up as usual but with just one headline visible. "Girls Drown." The dateline gave the name of the town where he had been teaching. The story said that the rowboat in which a group of girls were boating on the Mississippi had tipped, and one of the girls who had drowned was the daughter of the druggist. Some months later a letter from a friend down there told him that the druggist's son had been killed in a hunting accident. The whole family had moved to an island in the Gulf of Mexico.

About a year after this, the teacher came down to breakfast and his paper wasn't there on the table. It was the first time this had happened, he said, since the previous time. He found the newspaper in the same spot on the porch as it had been the time before, and there was just one headline visible. He got a strange feeling even before he picked it up. He read, "Entire Family Wiped Out." The story told about a hurricane and a tidal wave that had washed over the island where the druggist and his family lived, destroying their house. He said in his book telling about this, "I don't think that all this happened to them because the druggist punched me. But I am sure that the Lord was letting me know that he means it when he says, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay.'" The title of the book is, Die Rache Ist Mein, Vengeance Is Mine.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (12:20). Commentators debate what is meant by this. One thing is sure, this would be mighty uncomfortable. Being kind to people who are nasty to you is one way that you are allowed to make them feel uncomfortable. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (12:21).

The chapter division doesn't belong here. Originally there were no chapter divisions in the Bible. The end of ch. 12 and the first verses of ch. 13 belong together. What is the "fist" that God usually uses to punch a fellow back? The government. God instituted civil government to take care of people who do nasty things.

## ROMANS 13

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (13:1). Luther's translation is a lot better than the King James. "Jedermann sey unterthan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat. Let every man be subject to that government that has authority over him." The higher powers have authority "over" you. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (13:2). This means condemnation in the courts, first of all. And God's punishment too, if a person doesn't repent of this sin, since there could be no government to regulate human affairs without God's providence or permission.

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same for he is the minister of God to thee for good" (13:3,4). The government is a servant of God to serve you for your benefit. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain" (13:4). Today we would say, "He doesn't wear that pistol for nothing." The symbol of the government is the policeman on the beat. He carries a weapon to shoot people with if they are uncontrollable otherwise. "For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:4). See, "Vengeance is mine" (12:19), and the government is God's "minister" or servant who is to avenge. When "A" punches "B" on the nose, "B" is to move over and let God intervene. Through the government God punches "A" in the nose and straightens out the matter correctly. God's justice is always completely fair. The teacher in the story that I told would have had a perfect right to tell the lawyer, "I'll sign the complaint." But it would have been perfectly obvious that he was helping the lawyer avenge himself improperly. It would have been wrong to encourage the man's hatred.

"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (13:5). You should obey the government "for conscience sake," not just for fear of punishment if you break the law. You obey because you know what God wants you to do. When the government says, "Do it this way," your conscience tells you to obey. Again, this is "your reasonable service" (12:1). It comes from the heart.

"For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (13:6). Taxes are used to support the government, to help it punish the evildoers, for instance. Here we have different kinds of taxes. "Tribute" was tax paid to a foreign government. "Custom" is the tax that is paid when you move goods from one country to another, from state to state or between provinces.

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (13:8). You should pay all your debts, but after you've paid them there is still one debt that you owe and that you will never be able to pay off. That is the debt of love. No matter how much you love your neighbor today, tomorrow you'll owe him just as much love. This is a debt that you'll never be able to pay off completely. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (13:9,10). So there you have your duty over against mankind in general.

The last section of ch. 13 simply brings this admonition to a head by saying, "God wants you to do this because this is the only thing that fits the hope that you have as people who expect someday to be saved." "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (13:11), when we first came to faith. You're closer to heaven now than when

you were baptized. Your Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:29) is closer now than it was then, so since the end of your life gets closer and closer all the time, you have all the more reason for living the kind of life that you'd like to be living when the end of your life comes. So it's "high time to awake out of sleep," to work for God, to stop taking it easy. "Present your bodies (as) a living sacrifice" (12:1) because you don't have a lot of time left. Let us work "while it is day" (John 9:4).

"The night (our life in this world) is far spent, the day is at hand (Judgment Day, when the glorious light will shine for us in heaven): let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (13:12). "The works of darkness" are those things of which you are ashamed, which you try to hide. But works of light are the things that you can do in front of the whole world without being ashamed. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness (wild living, sins against the sixth commandment, different kinds of immorality), not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (13:13,14). Put on the Lord Jesus as you put on good clothes. You're conscious always that if you're wearing the righteousness of Christ you stay out of the mud, right? If you have little children, you know that when you put clean clothes on them you say, "See how long you can keep clean. Don't go playing in the mud." That's what Paul is saying here. "Don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh; that's improper when you're wearing Jesus."

#### ROMANS 14

This interesting chapter deals with the problem of the weak brother. To understand it you have to understand what it means to be weak in faith. When we hear the word "faith," we always think of faith in Jesus as our Savior. That is part of our Christian faith, but not the whole of it. The Christian faith is what Christians believe. Faith is being sure about something (Hebrews 11:1). The Christian faith is being sure of those things that Christians ought to be sure about. What should Christians be sure about? Everything that's in the Bible. The Christian faith might be diagrammed as a circle. At the center is this: "Jesus died for my sins and took them all away." Close by is: "By baptism God washes my sins away. Through the Lord's Supper he gives us the forgiveness of sins. Through the Word he gives us the forgiveness of sins." The promise of forgiveness is the central part of what Christians are sure about. God will keep his promise to forgive me and take me to heaven.

God wants the Christian to believe everything that's in the Bible, including the things that aren't quite so important. The fact that the universe was created in six days (Exodus 20:11) is not at the heart of the Christian faith, but it is still something God wants Christians to believe. Or that Balaam's ass spoke (Numbers 22:28), Christians believe that account too. And Christians believe that when God says in the N.T. that it's alright to eat pork, that you can eat it (Leviticus 11:7; Acts 10:9-16). Some of the Jewish Christians in Rome had their problems with this. All their lives they had been taught that eating pork was an unclean thing; you don't get over these feelings so soon. When they were told that they could eat pork, some of them said, "How can you be so sure about that? My conscience tells me that I shouldn't."

Years ago, a Missouri Synod pastor in Iowa instructed a Roman Catholic man who was in his 70s. His daughter was a schoolteacher who had joined the Lutheran Church. She persuaded her father to go to church with her. Finally he started taking instructions. He said, "It's just wonderful to know that your sins are forgiven. You don't have to worry about purgatory and all that." He really accepted the Lutheran doctrine. But then the time came for him to be confirmed, and he said, "Pastor, I don't think that I can become a member of the church." The pastor asked, "What's the problem?" He said, "Well, you say it's a sin to pray to the Virgin Mary, and you're probably right, but I can't go to sleep at night without praying to her. When I was

a little boy, my mother taught me to pray to Mary when I went to bed, and I can't sleep if I don't. So I don't think that I could become a member of your congregation but I'd like to come to your services." The pastor said, "Sure, you're welcome. Anytime you're ready to be confirmed, you let me know, and we'll receive you into membership." Sometime later, when the pastor was having communion announcements, the man came to the parsonage. He said, "I'd like to come to communion tomorrow. Last night was the first time that I went to sleep without praying to the Virgin Mary. Now I think I can be a real Lutheran." And he joined the congregation.

That gives you an idea of how difficult it is to get over some of the notions that you have. Now Paul says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs" (14:1,2). To be strong in faith means to be sure about something. To be weak in faith means not to be so sure about something. A person may not be so sure that it's alright to eat pork. Someone who is strong in faith eats anything. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (14:3).

Today there are some Christians who are absolutely sure that it's a sin to drink a glass of beer. Are they weak in faith? Being weak in faith means not to be sure. If you're absolutely sure that it's a sin to drink a glass of beer, then you're strong in faith, but it isn't a Christian faith. It might be the Baptist faith or a Methodist faith, but it isn't the Bible faith. You're sure about something that you should not be sure about. You're not weak in faith, but strong in false doctrine. We don't have to have the same kind of consideration for a person like this as we would have for one who is weak in faith. People who judge others say that they are wrong. The man who is weak in faith isn't sure. If you're not sure yourself, then don't make your uncertainty a norm for somebody else. If someone is sure about it, then let him drink his glass of beer; but avoid drunkenness (13:13). That is a sin.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (14:4,5). Here you have this business of the Sabbath day. The Jews were trained to celebrate every Saturday as the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:10). The Christian Church taught that there is no special day set aside for the worship of God (Colossians 2:16,17). Why not? Because every single day we live is to be a day for worship (Luke 2:37; Acts 26:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). So Christians never say that a certain day has been set aside, not even Sunday. It just so happens that Sunday has become the customary day (Acts 20:7), but not because God orders it. If we have a service on Wednesday we go to that just as gladly as on Sunday morning. I hope you do. "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it" (14:6).

"He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (14:6). You might say that he who drinks a glass of beer drinks it to the Lord and thanks God for it. Another man thanks God that he doesn't have to drink it, because it tastes like varnish anyway.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (14:7,8). If living or dying doesn't change your relationship with the Lord, a pork chop or a glass of beer won't either. Those things aren't important. And if somebody has his doubts, don't make a big issue of it. You receive him into the congregation anyway. Only don't let him start a "doubtful disputation" (14:1). If he gets up and says, "It's a sin for everybody in this church to drink beer," you say, "Now just a minute. Now you're committing a sin. You're going against God's Word. You can't say that about your fellow Christians." And then you have to deal with it. If he doesn't repent of his sin, we have to ex-

communicate him. So if he has his doubts, fine; but if he starts a disputation about his doubts, if he insists that his doubts are the right thing, then he is no longer a weak brother, but a false teacher who shouldn't be allowed to mislead a congregation.

"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (14:9). See, Christ was dead and he's alive; and he's the Lord of those who were dead and those who are alive, because he's been both places.

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (14:10). If your brother doesn't drink a glass of beer because he has his qualms, don't make fun of him. He is living according to his conscience. If someone doesn't drink a glass of beer because he has conscience problems about it, give him credit for that. Would you want him to have to live with a bad conscience? So a weak brother shouldn't accuse his strong brother of sinning, and the strong brother shouldn't ridicule his weak brother who is not as far advanced in understanding what a Christian life is, what it means to give your body as "a living sacrifice" to God (12:1). Since Christ is our Judge, we are not to judge each other about these things.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (Isaiah 45:23). So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (14:11,12). This, by the way, is another indication of the fact that Jesus is God. Romans 14:10 speaks of "the judgment seat of Christ," and now Paul says that we "shall give account ... to God." So when you're giving an account of yourself to Christ, you're giving account to God. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (14:13). Don't let anybody do anything by which a neighbor will be led to commit a sin.

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (14:14). Pork isn't unclean anymore. Mixed flour isn't unclean anymore - the Jews were not allowed to sow a field with "mingled seed" (Leviticus 19:19). There were so many things that they were not allowed to do. Certain clothes they were not allowed to wear. Certain foods they were not allowed to eat. On certain days they were not allowed to work. Now Paul says what was unclean in the O.T. is not unclean today. But if somebody still believes that it is sinful to do something, then when he does it he is doing something sinful. But what commandment is he breaking? A sin is a sin against a commandment, doing what God tells you not to do or not doing what God tells you to do. The sin here is against the first commandment, which Luther explains by saying, "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things" (Small Catechism).

Once it was a sin for a Roman Catholic to eat meat on Fridays, but that rule has been changed. A lot of Catholics, however, still had some real conscience problems with this. They kept right on eating fish for many years. Now suppose that you had a Roman Catholic friend in those days, and you went out to dinner with him on a Friday. He is a pious Christian who really believes that the Lord Jesus is his Savior. He may have this wrong idea that it's a sin to eat meat on Friday, but that doesn't make him a non-Christian. If you have the opportunity, you should help him get over some of these wrong notions. But he still believes it is a sin to eat a porkchop on Friday. So you invite him out to a restaurant, and you order a porkchop. If he wants to eat fish, but orders a porkchop, your example has led him to do something wrong. If you know that he's kind of weak, following the leader all the time, then you better order fish. If he thinks that God doesn't want him to eat a porkchop, but eats one anyway, he's breaking the first commandment, which says that you should love God more than you love porkchops. If he eats the porkchop believing that he's going to please you, but displease God, then he has more respect for your opinion than for God's will as he sees it. So he's not living in the fear and love of God. Paul says that nothing is unclean of itself, but is unclean if you think it's unclean for you.

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (14:15). If you, by ordering a porkchop, have led a brother into having a bad conscience, he'll start worrying about having disobeyed God when he returns home from that Friday night dinner. He is "grieved" because of the food that you ordered that day. You can give a person such a bad conscience that finally he will think that he can't be forgiven anymore. It's not always the size of a sin that gives a person a bad conscience. You can have an awfully bad conscience about some minor offense. Would you destroy the soul of a person for whom Christ died for the sake of a porkchop, or a glass of beer, or a cigarette? Just think of what the stakes are when you lead people into sin. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of" (14:16). What's good for you can become something bad if you use it in a way that makes your neighbor sin, that urges your neighbor to do something that's against his conscience.

There are three groups of people. Some people are strong in the right faith. Some are weak, easily led one way or another. Some are strong on the other side, in their wrong notions. These are the false teachers. We don't give them any room, Paul says, "not for an hour" (Galatians 2:5). If I were eating with a Catholic priest then I would order the porkchop, because he's not a weak brother. He's a strong false teacher, helping to teach a wrong notion. If you try to force me to live according to your rules, then I say, "Nothing doing!" Keep these three groups of people in mind, and I think that things will be a little more clear for you.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (14:17-19). When you lead someone into sin, you are tearing him down. When you help him and are considerate of his wrong notions, if he is weak in the faith, then you are helping to build him up. You are trying to make him stronger in the right direction, not in the wrong direction. "For meat (for the sake of a porkchop) destroy not the work of God. All things in deed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence" (14:20). We're talking about the strong person who by doing what he knows is right leads his weak brother into doing something that he thinks is wrong. In that way the strong person eats with offence.

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (14:21). In other words, if the feelings of your neighbor or if the good life of your neighbor is harmed by what you do, even though what you're doing is right, then you are not doing something that is pleasing to God.

I used to smoke pretty heavily, but I'm not very comfortable with seeing either men or women smoking today because I remember a good friend who died of cancer of the lungs. My first congregation was in a strong Dutch Reformed neighborhood. These people said that it's a sin to smoke cigarettes. I never smoked cigarettes in public while I was there because I knew that if I did there was just no chance of having any kind of influence among those people. We had a pastoral conference in that area - most of the pastors smoked at that time. They would smoke on the sidewalk in front of the church. At this conference, before recess, the local pastor got up and said, "I would appreciate it very much if you didn't smoke on the sidewalk, because it's going to offend our neighbors. If you want to smoke, use the church basement." Not a single pastor lit up a cigarette on the sidewalk. Once one of the Missouri Synod pastors was walking down the street in his town with a cigarette in his mouth. He met a Dutch Reformed pastor who reached over and took his cigarette and threw it on the sidewalk and stepped on it. Then he said, "Brother Krueger, have a cigar." See, a cigar was alright; you could have a cigar, but it was a sin to smoke a cigarette. Today we know more about the effects of smoking. If, by smoking, people destroy their own bodies, then it's a sin against the fifth commandment.



In my first congregation we never played cards in the parish hall. In my second congregation everybody played cards in the parish hall - simply because it was a different kind of community. You give up whatever is going to hurt the reputation of the church. They're wrong, of course, but we're going to respect their feelings. They're also Christians, weak Christians, Christians who are in error in many things, but we ought not make it harder for them to listen to the Lutheran Church by outwardly giving them the impression that the Lutheran Church doesn't care what kind of a life you lead. Paul says, "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" (1 Corinthians 10:29). Simply because you are concerned about his welfare.

(Q.) How far can you get into wrong beliefs without losing your salvation? (A.) Pretty far. False doctrine is also a sin. And if somebody believes that Jesus died for all of his sins, also his false doctrine is forgiven. But if he no longer believes that Jesus is his Savior, that Jesus died for his sins, then he's no longer a Christian. That doesn't mean it's alright to teach something that's false. It's really surprising how many good Lutherans there are outside of the Wisconsin Synod who believe exactly as we do.

My aunt and uncle had a Catholic tenant upstairs in their duplex, a very strict Catholic lady. You know what that meant 30 or 40 years ago, right? When you were a strict Catholic, all Protestants went to hell - that's all there was to it. This lady felt that way, but she was a nice lady, and she and my aunt were good friends. One day this woman came downstairs and sat down at the kitchen table. My aunt had a Catechism opened to the Second Article, and this Catholic lady read it. "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death." She said to my aunt, "Do you believe that?" My aunt said, "Yes, I believe that." And she said, "If you believe that, you're going to go to heaven even if you are a Lutheran! That's the most wonderful statement of the Christian faith I have ever read in my life. Who wrote that?" My aunt said, "Why don't you look at the cover?" She looked, and it said, Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism. So this Catholic lady was embarrassed because she had just said that the most wonderful expression of the Christian faith that she had ever read in her whole life was written by the archheretic of them all. Actually, she believed the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed so firmly that she thought that anybody else who believed it could go to heaven even if he were a Lutheran. Many of our friends in other churches believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior. You want to help them over their wrong notions, however, whenever you have such an opportunity.

Even in the Lutheran Church, we have people who have their doubts about some things. There was a very fine man in my second congregation. I used to go fishing with him, but we never caught anything because there are no fish in Iowa. So when we went fishing we sat on the creek bank and talked about religion. He was a gifted Sunday School teacher. One day when we were sitting there he said, "I have my doubts about the six days of creation. I'd never say that in a congregation meeting. I'd never teach it to my Sunday School children. But I'm just not so sure about this." I tried to help him. I don't think I ever got through to the man, but as long as he keeps it to himself, as long as he doesn't spread it in the congregation, as long as he is very hesitant and unsure of himself, we'll try to help him. We won't throw him out of the congregation. But if he would get up and say, "The preacher is all wrong when he says that the universe was created in six days; anybody who knows anything about science knows that the Bible isn't right on this point," then I would say, "Now you are no longer a weak Christian. Now you have become a false teacher, strong in the wrong faith, and that we can't tolerate." All these examples show how you deal with a weak Christian. You don't despise him; you don't give in to him. Nor do you by your example lead him to do something that he thinks is wrong.

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (14:22). You may permit people to drink beer, but you're a happy man if you don't drink beer in a situation where it will make your neighbor drink a glass of beer when he thinks that it's a sin. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (14:23). If you're not sure that what you're doing is right, then it's wrong to do it.

I guess that we have to stop here, though we didn't get to chapters 15 or 16. Most of that is pretty clear. You know that we came to a parting of the ways with the Missouri Synod on Romans 16:17,18. These verses say that if people teach something different from what the Bible teaches, then you should avoid them. When the Missouri Synod began to teach things which were contrary to the Bible, it became necessary for us to sever fellowship with them. The Missouri Synod used to teach this about fellowship too. When I was a pastor in the Missouri Synod in my early years, why, we taught clearly that if anybody teaches another doctrine that isn't taught in the Bible, we couldn't have fellowship with them. When the Missouri Synod dropped that and began to have fellowship with all kinds of false teachers, and permit false teachings to be taught, then it became our duty to avoid them.

#### ROMANS 15

This chapter continues the section on practical questions of Christian life. In this work, reference is made to 15:14,15 on page 110, and to 15:20 on pages 110 and 112. Romans 15:24 is cited on page 113, and 15:25,26 on page 113.

#### ROMANS 16

There is some final instruction in this chapter, but most of the chapter records Paul's greetings to various Christian individuals, or the greetings of some individuals to the Christians in Rome. In this work, references are made to the following verses: 1, p. 113; 2, pp. 7,8; 3, pp. 111, 112; 4, p. 8; 5, pp. 111,112; 6, p. 112; 12, p. 8; 15, p. 7; 17,18, p. 109; 23, p. 113; 27, p. 49.

#### THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS - ORIGIN AND AUTHORSHIP

##### To Whom Was This Letter Written?

The Letter to the Romans was written to Christians who lived in the city of Rome. When the letter was written, Rome was, of course, the capital of the Roman Empire. It had approximately a million inhabitants in the First Century A.D. It's been estimated that there were at least 50,000 Jews in the city of Rome living in a special section set aside for them. There is evidence that there were at least nine synagogues.

(Q.) Did these Jews migrate in recent years to Rome? (A.) The Jews had been in Rome for quite a number of years before Paul's time. The Jews had spread all through the Empire 150-200 years before Christ's coming. Of course, there were Jews spread along the eastern Mediterranean long before that. Alexander the Great settle a large number of Jews in Alexandria, Egypt about 330 B.C. There were Jewish colonies throughout Asia Minor 250 years before Christ. But shortly afterward the Jewish movement was westward. Rome was a commercial center, and you would expect that the Jews would gravitate there.

As I said, there were at least nine synagogues in Rome. Yet Paul's letter is not written specifically to the inhabitants of the Jewish quarter, so far as we can tell. There may have been some groups living in that quarter, perhaps Aquila and Priscilla; but most of the Christians who belonged to the congregation at Rome seem to have been slaves who lived in the households of their heathen masters in other sections of Rome. The letter is not only addressed to Jewish Christians, but it is also very evident that a number of Gentiles were in this group.

### Was This Congregation In Rome Founded By St. Peter?

The congregation at Rome is looked upon in the Roman Catholic Church as the first congregation of Christendom, and the pastor of the church in Rome is the pastor of the whole Christian Church, the pope. Their doctrine of papal supremacy goes back to their claim that the pope is the successor of Peter, that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and that he founded the congregation there and served as its bishop for 25 years. This is the basis for their doctrine of the papacy.

There is good biblical evidence that this congregation was not founded by Peter and could not possibly have been founded by Peter. If you read Roman Catholic books on the founding of the congregation at Rome, you will often hear a remark like this: "After Peter left Jerusalem during the persecution of Agrippa he came to Rome, founded a congregation there, and served as its pastor, or bishop, for 25 years. Acts 12:17." Of course, if you read a remark like this followed by a Bible passage, you would expect that in that Bible passage you would find biblical proof for the preceding statement. Look it up. It's the only passage quoted for their doctrine that Peter founded the congregation and served as pastor at Rome for 25 years. It's not the passage (Matthew 16:17-19) upon which they base Peter's supremacy and the papal succession, but it is the passage that they quote for their claim that Peter founded the congregation in Rome. It says, "...And he departed, and went into another place." That's all it says. This is the biblical proof that Peter came to Rome and founded the congregation. If Peter died about 68 A.D., he would have arrived in Rome about 44 A.D., which would be 25 years, but there is still no indication in the Bible that he went to Rome.

There is ample biblical evidence that would seem to testify against a Petrine origin for the Roman congregation. When St. Paul wrote the letter to the Romans he told them that it was his settled policy not to preach the gospel where another apostle had labored before him. "Yes, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ is named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20). This could be reconstrued: "My settled aim has been to preach the gospel in places where Christ had not been named before, so that I might not build upon a foundation which had been laid by another man." So if Peter had founded the congregation in Rome, Paul would have been acting contrary to his own missionary policy by going there to preach. This is borne out by the whole nature of the epistle.

The Epistle to the Romans is the one book of the New Testament that gives a very orderly presentation of the chief parts of Christian doctrine. There isn't another letter in the New Testament which covers the whole field of Christian doctrine like Romans does. Paul describes the Christians in Rome as being "filled with all knowledge" (Romans 15:14). Nevertheless, Paul reviews a broad range of Christian doctrine "as putting you in mind" (Romans 15:15) of all these things.

When Paul came to Rome about 60 A.D. (there's some doubt about that date, but let's use it) as a prisoner, one of the first things that he did was to call the leaders of the Jewish section of the city to meet with him so that he might give them an account of the reasons for his being present in the city, and that he might testi-

fy to them concerning the gospel (Acts 28:16-24). These leaders don't know much about the Christian religion. They say, "Concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against" (Acts 28:22). Then Paul explains to them from the O.T. who Jesus is. If Peter came to Rome in 44 A.D. he has been there for 16 years when Paul comes. Peter was especially active among Jews (Galatians 2:7,8). Paul's main preaching was to Gentiles. Can you imagine St. Peter preaching for 16 years in the Jewish community at Rome and the leaders of that community not knowing very much about Christianity? If you can imagine that, you don't know very much about St. Peter. This is not the sort of fellow who crept around in corners whispering things behind the backs of the community leaders. This was a man who stood up to the leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem and testified boldly concerning Christ: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). From the way Paul spoke to the Jewish leaders, it is evident that he is thoroughly explaining the Christian religion to them for the first time. This indicates that Peter wasn't in Rome before 60 A.D.

During the two years, or a bit more, that St. Paul was in Rome (about 60 to 62 A.D.) he wrote the so-called captivity letters: Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. In these letters written from Rome, Paul mentions the names of his associates in Rome. One example would be Colossians 4:10-14. Paul sends greetings to the Colossians from these men. Peter's name is not found here; his name is not found in any of the captivity letters. Now suppose that Peter is the head of the Christian community at Rome - he's the pastor of that whole group of people - and St. Paul is brought there as a prisoner. Suppose that St. Paul sends greetings from fellow workers in Rome, and he doesn't mention Peter. This would indicate that either Paul and Peter were not on speaking terms with one another, or else that Peter isn't there. We would conclude that the second possibility is the correct one.

Writing about 56, 57, or 58 A.D. at the latest, St. Paul sends greetings to a whole string of people in Rome (Romans 16:3-15). In his commentary Lenski says that the people who are mentioned here are all the members of the Roman congregation. They are not all mentioned by name, but Paul says, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila (and the church that is in their house" (16:3,5). In this whole list of names the name of Peter does not appear. Now try to imagine this situation, if Peter is the pastor. Paul is writing a letter to Peter's congregation. He sends greetings to all the leaders but pointedly omits the name of Peter. I just can't imagine such a situation being in accord with the facts. So we would say that Peter certainly wasn't in Rome at 57 A.D. Nor was he in Rome in 60, 61, or 62 A.D., as we already said.

The historical evidence is against this too. The statement that Peter was the bishop in Rome for 25 years is not found until 400 years after Christ. St. Jerome (340?-420) is the very first one to say this. This would be about 350 years after Peter was supposedly in Rome - a good long time. When we say 400 A.D., to us it seems like the day after tomorrow as far as Christ's time is concerned. But try to imagine what 400 years would be like in our terms. Back from 1965 would be 1565, less than 20 years after Luther died. Now if somebody for the first time says Luther did something for which he has absolutely no historical evidence, we would say that this is a completely unreliable statement about Luther. That's the sort of thing that you have with the statement that Peter was bishop in Rome for 25 years.

This doesn't bother most Roman Catholic theologians because they admit that historically there is no real ground for this doctrine. They say this is a statement of faith. "It isn't mentioned in any of the historical works that survive, but it was in those that have perished" - which is a statement you can't disprove.

(Q.) Is that part of Catholic dogma? (A.) Yes, very definitely, the whole dogma of papal supremacy. Peter has to be the founder of the congregation in Rome; he has to be bishop of Rome for the whole doctrine of papal supremacy to stand. Peter has to be the first pope; and "pope" means bishop of Rome in their terms. They say that he ruled from 44 to 68 A.D. Peter must have died before June, 68 A.D., because this

much we know from church history, that Peter was executed under Nero, who died in June of 68 A.D. Peter may have come to Rome about 64 or 65 A.D.

Peter was in Jerusalem for the apostolic council (Acts 15:6-29) in 48 A.D. So if he "went into another place" (Acts 12:17) in 44 A.D., it is evident that he is back in 48. There is no reason to assume that he came from Rome. There's no indication that he is head of the council. James is the head of the council. Of course, this doesn't really cut any ice as far as papal supremacy is concerned. He doesn't have to be chairman of the council in order to be bishop of Rome.

#### How Was The Congregation In Rome Founded?

Now the question arises, how was the congregation founded if Peter didn't found it and Paul evidently didn't found it? And Paul says that his missionary policy is to preach in places where a "foundation" has not been laid by some other man (Romans 15:20). There is some biblical evidence that would give us a clue.

First of all, we know that on the day of Pentecost there were Jews, "strangers of Rome" (Acts 2:10), present in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. Evidently some of these people were among the 3,000 converts (Acts 2:41). When Pentecost was over these people went back to Rome carrying their newfound faith with them. They believed in Jesus as "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), the promised Messiah. When they got to Rome they spoke of the fulfillment of the prophecies. They knew enough so that on the basis of the Old Testament they could discover all of the Christian doctrine. These people formed the nucleus of the Roman congregation.

There is some evidence in the letter to the Romans that would point to the origin of the congregation. Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3) were Paul's friends from years gone by. Paul met them in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:2) about 50 A.D. There, in Corinth, Paul must have brought them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Seven years later, when Paul writes to the Romans about 57 A.D., they are living at Rome. So they are like those "strangers of Rome" (Acts 2:10) who became Christians in another place. There was a persecution of Jews in Rome that came to an end when Claudius died in 54 A.D. Soon after 54 Aquila and Priscilla must have moved back to Rome. There they gathered a group of Christians about them. So Paul writes to greet them and "the church that is in their house" (Romans 16:5).

Paul also says, "Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" (16:5). Achaia is Greece. This man was converted in Greece, very likely in Corinth; then he became a member of the Christian group in Rome.

"Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us" (Romans 16:6). Paul had never been in Rome. Here he sends greetings to a woman named Mary who had worked for him. Evidently Paul must have met her somewhere else in the Roman Empire. She may have been converted in some other city before moving to Rome.

"Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine" (Romans 16:13). That's one of my favorite phrases from Romans. Rufus wasn't Paul's brother. People call someone else's mother "Mom" when they're close personal friends, when they've often been in their home. Evidently here was a family that Paul was close to, so close that he could actually call someone in this home "Mom." But Paul was never in Rome as yet. He must have met them some place else.

Who knows how many of the others in this list were friends of Paul from other places, Christians who had been converted elsewhere? That is very likely the origin of that congregation. These Roman Christians gathered in little groups and encouraged one another in their newfound faith. While we can't say this with certainty, the evidence points in that direction. The congregation was made up of Jews and Gentiles; this becomes clear when you read the letter.

There are many congregations in the Wisconsin Synod that were not founded by pastors, especially these last years. Some of you know how members of the Wisconsin Synod moved into areas where there was no conservative Lutheran church. These people wrote to the synod offices for recorded services, and they would gather other Christians in their homes and play the tapes. They would have services regularly every Sunday for months before a pastor came. He might fly in once a month for communion services. There are quite a number of congregations that started in this way. That's how I think this congregation in Rome got started.

#### When And Where Was This Letter Written?

Romans is one of the letters of the N.T. that we can date almost to the exact month; there is some doubt concerning the year, but the month is pretty definite. At least we know what season of the year it was written. In Acts 19 Paul is coming to the end of his third missionary journey. (We might review Paul's movements very quickly. You'll have to use your imagination together with my map drawing.) Paul had come from Asia Minor on his second missionary journey. He wanted to go up into Asia, but the Holy Spirit wouldn't let him, so he went to Troas. From Troas he went to Philippi, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and home to Jerusalem. On the third missionary journey Paul came from Jerusalem again; he preached at Ephesus for over two years. Then at the close of his Ephesian ministry comes the incident with the silversmiths in which the people shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:23-41). Paul left the city in the spring sometime. He wrote 1 Corinthians, and said, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost" (1 Corinthians 16:8). He might have cut short his visit in Ephesus because of the riot. Then he went to Macedonia, where he wrote 2 Corinthians. He had said that he was planning to spend the winter months in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:6). He was there for three months (Acts 20:3). The next spring he left Corinth and celebrated Passover in Philippi (Acts 20:6). Passover would be in March or April. This means that Paul must have left Corinth in March. If he spent three months there, it must have been February, January and December. In his letter to the Romans Paul says, "I'm on my way to Jerusalem with the collection for the saints" (15:25,26). He would leave from Corinth. So Romans was written on Paul's third missionary journey shortly before he left Corinth. The date I would give for Romans today would be February of either 57 or 58; and I would be inclined to favor 57 A.D.

There are other indications that this letter was written from Corinth. If Paul commends to them the deaconess of the church in Cenchræa (Romans 16:1), it ties this letter in with Christians from that area. Paul also speaks of "Gaius mine host" (16:23), and there was a very prominent member of the Corinthian congregation whose name was Gaius (1 Corinthians 1:14). But this was a common name in those days.

(Q.) Did Paul get any farther west than Rome? (A.) Well, as far as the Bible goes, this is as far as he got. However, one of the early church fathers, Clement (possibly the Clement of Philippians 4:3) said that Paul visited "the extremity of the west." That would be Spain. Paul says in Romans (15:24) that his intention was to go to Spain after he had been to Rome. Whether or not he was able to carry out this plan we don't know. I personally believe that Paul came to Spain; but I wouldn't make a doctrinal issue of this because the Bible doesn't say so. I believe that Paul came to Spain and then moved back once more through the Mediterranean. Then he came to Crete and up to Asia Minor and down to Achaia, was taken prisoner a second time, and taken to Rome. This time his imprisonment was under entirely different conditions than those described in Acts 28, or even in Philippians (1:13,14; 4:22), or Colossians (4:7,18).

The church fathers say that Peter came to Rome shortly before he died, and was executed there by hanging upside down - but nothing before the time of Jerome about Peter being pope. Not one church writer before Jerome says anything about Peter

being in Rome prior to about 64-65. The date is not given us, but from what is said it can't be any earlier than this. Secular writers don't mention Peter. The statement we have to that effect is in Eusebius' Church History. Eusebius (263?-339?) quotes earlier writers, and he says that he has information from them that Peter came to Rome shortly before his death.

This doesn't bother the Catholics because the church is supreme. When I was at River Forest one of the girls took a Roman Catholic course of instruction offered in the newspapers all the time by the Knights of Columbus. She would answer the questions in the Lutheran way and send them in. The priest who corrected them wrote down the Roman Catholic answers and sent them back to her. Then she would write to him and ask for biblical proof for each statement. Finally he got a little disgusted with her. She showed me the letter she got from him. He said, "Evidently you are under the impression that every doctrine of the church must be proved by a Bible statement. This is your protestant training. We Catholics do not believe this is necessary." You don't have to have any biblical or secular statement for any doctrine of the church because, as Cardinal Newman said, "We neither derive our religion from the Scriptures, nor does it depend on them." They are completely without evidence, and a good Roman Catholic historian will tell you this.

There is no biblical evidence for the Catholic doctrine of Peter being the first pope in Rome. However, the church has spoken on this matter; the church is infallible. So it must be right even though we don't have any evidence, because the statement of the church is the best evidence you can have. If you start with the Roman Catholic premise this is a perfectly logical statement to make. If the church is infallible - and it says it is - what better proof can you have for the fact that Peter founded the congregation at Rome? If the biblical account doesn't jive with this, then you have to reinterpret it in the light of the church's teaching. The Bible is just part of the church's teaching, not the only source.

Peter probably came to Rome before he died. The First Epistle of Peter must have been written about 64, because Peter talks about a coming persecution (1 Peter 4:12-19). Peter writes, "The church that is at Babylon saluteth you" (1 Peter 5:13). Peter would be sending greetings from the church in Babylon when he was with the church in Babylon. The O.T. Babylon in Mesopotamia was the great enemy of God's people. The early Christians spoke of Rome as a regular Babylon sometimes. Today we say that a certain city is like Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20). The Book of Revelation identifies Rome as Babylon (Revelation 14:8; 17:5). It is the seat of the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12) who is wounded and healed, who makes war with the saints and rules all nations (Revelation 13:1-10). When you read about "seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth" (Revelation 17:9), you think of Rome, a city with seven hills. Since Babylon in Mesopotamia still existed when Peter wrote his first epistle, it is possible that he was there. If he was referring to Rome as Babylon, then 1 Peter 5:13 is evidence that Peter was in Rome. But that ought to demonstrate to you how weak the biblical evidence is for the doctrine that Peter founded the congregation in Rome and served as its bishop for 25 years.

Roman Catholicism quotes Matthew 16:18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and says that with these words Jesus designated Peter as the head of the church. If you look it up for yourself, you're going to have a hard time getting that out of this passage. The Catholics point to the fact that Peter means "rock," and that's true enough. But in the original Greek there is an interesting difference between the name "Peter" and the word "rock." The Greek for "Peter" is Petros, and for "rock" is petran. Petros is the kind of rock you can hold in your hand, whereas petra is bedrock. If you look at the context here, Jesus says this to Peter after Peter's great confession of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). This confession is the bedrock on which Christ's church is built.

That's how the N.T. talks about it. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). The Bible does talk about the church being built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, but with "Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20). So Jesus is the Rock upon whom the church is built. The confession of Peter concerning Christ, that he is the Messiah, "the Son of the living God," is the foundation of the church's existence.

(Q.) Did the Roman Catholic Church ever declare something as dogma and then re-examine itself on that dogma? (A.) They have a way of doing that without retracting anything. Was it Boniface VIII who said, "It is impossible for anyone who is not subject to the pope of Rome to be saved"? Anyway, during the time of Pius IX in the last century, they repeated this statement of Boniface, but they reworded it a little bit. "It is impossible for anyone who is not in some manner subject to the pope, the bishop of Rome, to be saved." That "in some manner" can be interpreted in many different ways. Some of them say that anyone who is baptized is "in some manner" subject to the bishop of Rome, because baptism is a sacrament of the Roman Church. It is a sacrament that can be performed by laymen. Therefore, when you were baptized, you were baptized with the sacrament of the Roman Church; so you are subject to the bishop of Rome. Therefore, there is a possibility that people who aren't Catholics may be saved.

(Q.) Would they back down on a question like the Assumption of Mary, or birth control? (A.) When they change some of these things, they are changing the rules of the church. I don't think they'd change the ruling on the Assumption of Mary. This is another one of those doctrines that is not mentioned in any of the fathers that have been preserved to us. "But this was mentioned in the writings of the early fathers that have perished," they argue. They say that this has always been a dogma of the church, but that it was never clearly enunciated until 1950. Until then it was a "pious opinion from which it is timorous to recede." It was an opinion which was dangerous to deny, but it was not yet dogma until 1950. Up to then a Roman Catholic could express some doubts about this, although it was dangerous to do so. Now it is a settled dogma of the church. No one may deny it on pain of excommunication. They'll never deny it; I'm sure of this.

The Vatican Council doesn't deny any dogma or doctrine. Rome is still the same; they just change some of the rules. But they are church laws, not fixed doctrines. There are very few fixed doctrines in the Roman Catholic Church. Really, there are more differences among Catholics - and those differences are much deeper and wider - than there are differences between Lutheran bodies in the United States. As long as you accept the authority of the pope and a few basic doctrines, you can say almost anything you want without placing yourself outside the pale. We have the impression sometimes that the Roman Catholic dogma is a large system of doctrine that is fixed. This isn't true. There are Roman Catholic teachers who come awfully close to teaching salvation by grace. The group of priests in France, for instance, who called themselves the Evangelical Priests, come very close to teaching the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by grace. There are other Roman Catholic teachers who teach salvation by works, pure and simple. Yet they are both in the same church, and they are brethren. They are all subject to the pope.

In other words, Roman Catholicism is a monolithic structure in organization only, but not in doctrine. You'll find Roman Catholic priests who write books against evolution, and you'll find Roman Catholic priests who write books in favor of evolution, and nobody considers this to be out of line at all. You can imagine what would happen if that happened in the Wisconsin Synod. At least I hope that something would happen in the Wisconsin Synod. Twenty-five years ago I thought that the roof would blow off the world if that would happen in the Missouri Synod.



### The Character Of Romans

As I said before, Romans is the one book of the N.T. which presents the chief parts of Christian doctrine in a very systematic and thorough way. Luther called it "The most absolute summary of the gospel - absolutissima epitima Evangelii," the most perfect summary of the gospel that we have. Melanchthon (1497-1560) called Romans "a compendium of Christian doctrine." The first Lutheran book of doctrine, Melanchthon's Loci communes (1521), was based on Romans. This was used at the University of Wittenberg in Melanchthon's lectures. That's why Luther never lectured on Romans after 1519, because Melanchthon took over that course. Loci is a very famous book with which you should be acquainted. Loci is Latin for "places, topics" in doctrine.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Paul E. Kretzmann's Popular Commentary of the Bible is just what it says it is, a commentary for teachers and laymen. It doesn't answer all the very difficult questions, but it is a very fine commentary.

Stoeckhardt's German commentary on Romans is very good. Actually, if you read Kretzmann's comments on Romans, these are Stoeckhardt's translated and condensed.

Lenski is the textbook for the course. He was a conservative, orthodox teacher from the American Lutheran Church. In his Romans you do have to watch chapters 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11, since he's not quite straight on the doctrine of Universal Justification, also the doctrine of Election. Otherwise, a very fine commentary.

If you read the Greek language you can use a critical commentary by Sanday and Headlam. Strangely enough, though these are Calvinistic authors, much of this is soundly Lutheran, because these fellows read Greek; and when they interpret Paul's remarks they come up with Lutheran statements, though not Lutherans themselves.