

Defender

“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Vol. LV

April 2026

Number 4

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Preface to the Epistle to the Romans

Alexander Campbell

As this epistle, when understood, is a sort of key to the greater number of Paul's letters, much depends on forming clear and comprehensive views of its import. As far as our limited means of furnishing such preparatory information as may assist the reader in examining it for himself will permit, we shall contribute our mite. In the first place, we request the reader's attention to a few facts of great importance in the investigation of this epistle: and, indeed, of all Paul's epistles.

I. The main question discussed in the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; or the grand topic of debate, from the time John the Immerser appeared in the wilderness of Judea, till the resurrection of Jesus, was—*Whether Jesus the Nazarene was the Messiah?* The Jews on the one part, and the Saviour and his Apostles on the other, were the only persons engaged in the controversy—the principal parties in this discussion. Hence, it was altogether confined to the Jews. Indeed, *they* only had the means of determining this point, as they were in possession of the oracles which foretold his coming, identified his person, and attested his pretensions.

II. The grand topic of debate, from the resurrection of Jesus till the calling of the Gentiles, an interval of several years, was—*Whether Jesus, who was crucified, had actually arisen from the grave, and ascended into heaven?* This, though different in form, was, in effect, the same as the preceding. It was differently proposed and argued, though tending to establish the same grand point. The Jews in Judea, the Samaritans, and the Jews in all the synagogues among the Gentiles, whither the Apostles went, were the only persons who took an active part in this controversy.

III. After the calling of the Gentiles, and the number of disciples among the Jews had greatly augmented, a new question arose, which, among the converts generally, and especially among those of the Jews, occupied as conspicuous a place as the first question did among the Jews in Judea. This question is as prominent in many of Paul's epistles, as the former is in the historic books of this volume. It is this—*Whether the Gentile converts had a right to be considered the people of God, equally as the Jewish believers; or, whether they should be received in the Chris-*

tian congregations of believing Jews, without submitting to any of the Jewish peculiarities, on the same footing with the circumcised and literal descendants of Abraham.

IV. Many questions grew out of this one, which, for a long time, occupied the attention of the Christian communities throughout the world, and called for the attention of the Apostles. But as Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was obliged to take a more active part in these discussions, and thus we always find him the bold and able advocate of their rights, however or by whomsoever assailed. To this question, we are, doubtless, indebted for much of the information which this Apostle has given us, as it was the occasion of so much being written on many topics connected with it, such as—

1st. The genius and design of circumcision. 2d. The promises made to Abraham. 3d. The nature and design of the law of Moses, or Old Covenant. 4th. The righteousness of the Law, and the righteousness of Faith; or justification by works, and justification by grace. 5th. The Jewish priesthood and sacrifices. 6th. The sacrifice of Christ. 7th. The grace of God, or the divine philanthropy. 8th.

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Notes From The Editor

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Worship

One of the needs God placed within man at creation was the need to worship. Thus, one will find any society worshipping something or someone. However, it is the Creator of both the universe and man who rightfully deserves our worship.

Realizing our need to worship, we must consider the question, “What is worship.” The English *worship* is from the Middle English word meaning “worthiness, respect.” It is, thus, defined as “reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power, also an act of expressing such reverence.” It would be an injustice to God’s Word if we left it at this without considering the Hebrew and Greek terms. The primary word translated *worship* in the Old Testament carries the meaning of “to bow down, prostrate oneself.” This is a posture indicating reverence toward one considered superior. When we come to the New Testament, the primary word is the Greek *proskuneo* which has as its primary meaning, “to kiss toward.” Arndt, Danker, and Bauer write this word is

used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before persons and kissing their feet or the hem of their garment, the ground...to express in attitude or gesture one’s complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, (*fall*

down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to.

Spiros Zodhiates gives us more detail when he writes:

To worship, do obeisance, show respect, fall or prostrate before. Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage. The ancient oriental (especially Persian) mode of salutation between persons of equal ranks was to kiss each other on the lips; when the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek; when one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees and touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, throwing kisses at the same time toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that Greek writers express by *proskuneo*. In the NT, generally, to do reverence or homage to someone, usually by kneeling or prostrating oneself before him. In the Septuagint it means to bow down, to prostrate oneself in reverence, homage.

In all these definitions (and others that could be called upon) the idea is expressed of showing respect to one whom we consider superior. Far too many today have an improper view and attitude of God resulting in improper worship. Because of that improper view, there is a lack of respect for God and a lack of faithful obedience to do only those actions God has authorized. It exhibits itself in man’s lackadaisical attitudes of worship in the way one clothes themselves and then the way they engage in the various avenues of worship. Only by having a proper view of God will we worship Him acceptably.

Yahweh is the only one who is truly worthy of being worshipped. There are numerous reasons, so, in this article we will only notice a few. He is worthy of being worshipped

because He is the Creator. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1) is the simple way the Scriptures begin. As God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, when He gets to the fourth commandment, “Remember the sabbath day,” God explains why they work six days and rest one day (the sabbath) by saying, “For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exo. 20:11). Those *days* were literal 24-hour days, and each day of that creation week, God was preparing a place for the crowning glory of His creation—man—who He would create in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27). He placed man in a beautiful garden He had prepared: the Garden of Eden. While man fell (sin in eating of the tree God said not to eat) and lost access to that beautiful Garden, we continue to see the beauties of God’s creation.

The creation and its beauties speak to the worthiness of God to receive our worship. As John writes the Revelation, he gives us a symbolic view of the throne of God and that He is in control. He also shows those around the throne worshipping God: “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. **Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.** All contributions shall be used for operational expenses. All correspondence permissible for publication.

Michael Hatcher, Editor

that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

Later, in Revelation, we find the victorious nature of Christ and those with Him. John saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting Gospel, “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (14:7). Truly, Yahweh is worthy to be worshiped because He created such a marvelous universe for our existence.

He not only is Creator, but He is also the Sustainer. God did not create the world and man, wind it up like a clock and then leave everything to itself. Deism teaches God created the universe then stepped back and never actively engages with His creation, including man. Yahweh continues to sustain its existence including the existence of man. Without God’s provisions, this universe would cease to exist. Notice what David pointed out, “Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast” (Psa. 36:6). In the days of Nehemiah, the Levites lead the Israelites in praise to God:

Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and

thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee (Neh. 9:5-6).

They recognize, as we should, that Yahweh preserves everything. It is no wonder that the host of heaven worships Him as we also should.

Yahweh is also omnipotent thus deserving of our worship. Man is awed by power. How many, both children and adults, are thrilled at the historical accounts of Samson’s strength. Yet, all the strength of all men of all time combined, would not come close to the awesome power of God. Isaiah writes of the great power of God, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26).

God’s power is demonstrated in at least three ways. First, is by His creative power. Since this has already been addressed, I will only add that Yahweh was able to create the universe out of nothing. He spoke the world into existence (Heb. 11:3). “Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee” (Jer. 32:17). Second, we observe God’s power by His sustaining power. That created universe must be sustained, and it takes as much power to sustain it as it does to create it.

Third, we see God’s power in His ability to recreate—create in man a new life. The Gospel is God’s power to save sinful man (Rom. 1:16). In saving man, it is the Gospel that gives man the ability to live by faith, thus creating a new man in Christ. When one initially obeys he is

made free from sin to live a life of righteousness (6:17-18). Notice how Paul had just described that obedience to what had been delivered (the Gospel of Christ—1 Cor. 15:1-4): “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were 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” (Rom. 6:3-4). In baptism we have our sins washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7), but then we are raised out of that watery grave of baptism to a newness of life: a life set forth by the Gospel of Christ.

The Spirit, through Paul, teaches us we must “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24). He repeats this to the Colossian brethren after listing several sins we are to “put off,” he writes, “seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:9-10). That knowledge is knowing the Truth, a knowledge of God’s will (1:9). God’s Will revealing to man how he is to live to be acceptable to God. God’s spoken word brought about the creation of all things at the beginning, and God’s spoken Word (the Gospel) is able to bring about a new creation spiritually. Let us all worship Yahweh because He is worthy to be worshipped.

MH

The election and calling of the Jews. 9th. The nature, design, and glory of the Christian constitution and assembly, and many other topics subordinate to, and illustrative of, the one grand question concerning the reception of the Gentiles.

To simplify still farther, and to comprehend under a few heads the whole apostolic writings; it may be said, that there are *three* gospels with their circumstances, which engross the whole volume.

The first is "*the glad tidings*," emphatically and supereminently so called, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, exhibited and proved to be the only begotten Son of God, sent to bless the people among whom he appeared, who credited his pretensions. The second is *the glad tidings of salvation to the Gentiles*, called "the Gospel of their Salvation." This exhibits Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and his death as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The third gospel, is that developed in the Revelation of John, in the common version, called "*the everlasting gospel*," or, good news; that the long apostasy, that the long dark night of antichristian superstition, tyranny and usurpation, is passed; and that the kingdoms of the whole world have become the kingdoms and empire of Jesus, the King of kings.

The circumstances that gave rise to these three gospels, constitute the shade in the picture of God's philanthropy. The development of the character and condition of the human family, relative to these *three gospels*, in connection with them, engross the whole apostolic writings. On this, a hint or two must suffice.

As to that which is by way of eminence called "*the Gospel*"—the degenerate and apostate state of the most enlightened and favored nation

among men, the descendants of the Father of the Faithful, form the contrast; and, as a foil, set off and brighten this most splendid of all exhibitions of the mercy of God, from which spring all other good news to men.

As to the second gospel or good news—the deplorable condition, the ignorance of God, and the nameless vices of the Gentile world, their long alienation from God, and scandalous idolatry, constitute a theater on which to exhibit to advantage the glad tidings of God's gracious purposes toward them from the beginning, evinced in sending his Son to make a propitiatory sacrifice for their sins, and in calling himself the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews.

And as to the third gospel—the awful apostasy of the professed Christian communities, and gross departure from the letter and spirit of the Christian institution; their schisms, strifes, and persecutions, which this apostasy has given rise to; the long rejection and continued infidelity of the Jews, with awful grandeur prepare the way for the proclamation of the everlasting good news—the joyful era, when it shall be sung, "*Babylon the Great is fallen, NEVER more to arise!*" The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his saints shall triumph with him for a thousand prophetic years! These engross the whole apostolic writings.

The first of these three has been fully discussed and established, in the testimonies of the four Evangelists. The second is recorded in the book of the Acts of Apostles, and developed in the epistles. The third, in some passages of the epistles, but particularly and fully, in the last revelation made to the Apostle John.

The epistle to the Romans is altogether devoted to the second—and was written with a design to prove that the believing Gentiles are, equally with the Jews, entitled to all the rights and immunities of citizenship, in the kingdom of God's own Son.

This brings us to the epistle to the Romans; in reference to which, let it be remembered, that, although the term *Roman*, in its most restricted sense, denoted a Pagan citizen of Rome; yet, both Jews and proselytes who lived there, were called *Romans*, as well as the Pagan citizens of Rome. Hence, Luke informs us, that Roman sojourners, both Jews and proselytes, heard Peter announce the glad tidings on Pentecost in Jerusalem. Hence, we may conclude, that a congregation in Rome was formed, soon after the return of the Roman Jews from Jerusalem. Though the congregation in Rome was at first composed exclusively of Jewish disciples; after the calling of the Gentiles, and especially at the time when Paul wrote this letter, it was composed of Jews and Gentiles.

Without going into a long detail of particular proofs to come at the *design* of the Apostle, in writing this letter; we may readily gather from the epistle itself, that the Jewish and Gentile disciples in this congregation, were not perfectly reconciled, on account of certain questions and debates, involving the Jewish peculiarity; that the great question between the Jews and Gentiles was not decided in this congregation, though so eminent in the Christian faith; that Paul wrote with a reference to the actual condition and circumstances of this people, according to the best information he had respecting them, not having been himself at Rome. As this congregation was

placed in so conspicuous a place, and was known to the whole Christian communities throughout the Roman empire, the settling of this question in Rome was a great object; and as the Apostle, though anxious to visit the city, had been prevented for a long time, he conceived the noble design of settling the difficulties between the Jewish and Gentile brethren in this city, by a long and argumentative epistle, embracing all the points of chief difficulty between the Jews and Gentiles in Rome, and elsewhere. Such was *the design* of writing this letter, as the circumstances and allusions found in it, and all evidences, internal and external, evince.

Having formed such a design, the Apostle was at no loss how to execute it. He was well skilled in all the questions and customs, and expert in all the arguments of the Jews, in the support of their peculiarity. He knew all that a Judaizer or an infidel Jew could say, in support of his favorite theme. Besides, as the Judaizer, who aimed at bringing the Gentiles under the law, argued from the same topics that the infidel Jew handled, to show the superiority of the Jew's religion, and to oppose the Christian, the Apostle so arranges his arguments as to silence both. He was well aware that this letter would soon become public property, and that it would be read by all parties, as well as by the brethren to whom it was addressed; for all would be anxious to know what "the apostate Jew," as some called him, or the great "Apostle to the Gentiles," had to say with reference to these questions. He writes with all these things before his mind.

It is worthy of notice, that the Apostle does not attempt to settle such questions merely, or, indeed, at all, by his apostolic authority.

Though his decision, without assigning a single reason for it, would be final amongst all Christians who recognized him as an Apostle; yet he does not attempt to settle the point in this way. He appears as a logician, and meets opposition, not by a decree, but by argument. In this way, he enlightens and confirms the Christians in the faith, and qualifies them to convince and silence those who would not receive the decree of an Apostle, as that from which there is no appeal.

Now, placing before our eyes the congregation of Christians in the great city of Rome, the mistress of the world, A. D., 57; every day visited by traveling Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, from all nations; considering the notoriety of this congregation, having the eyes of the philosophers, priests, and illustrious men of Rome fixed upon it; bringing near to ourselves the prejudices of Jews and Gentiles against each other in former times, and the high conceptions of the former, as being the only people, righteous, elected, approved, and beloved of God; remembering, too, their contempt of the Gentiles, rulers and ruled; their keen sensibility on every topic affecting their national honor; at the same time, fixing our eyes upon the author of this letter, his deep knowledge of the human heart, his profound acquaintance with the Jews' religion, and with the character and feelings of his countrymen; his great abilities as a logician; his divine skill in the Christian religion; his tenderness toward his brethren of the Jews; his zeal for their conversion—keeping all these things in remembrance, and above all, *his design* in writing this letter, let us attempt an analysis of the argumentative part of it:

1st. After his introduction and usual salutation, he gives an exact exhibition of the religious and moral character of the Gentile world.

2d. He delineates the religious and moral character of the Jewish people.

His design in this part of the epistle is to prove, that the mass of the Jews and Gentiles were equally vile and obnoxious to divine vengeance; that neither of them could constitute any claim on the righteousness of God; that they were equally destitute of national righteousness, and of every plea founded upon their own character or works. He also shows, that individuals amongst Jews and Gentiles, who acted in conformity to their means of knowing the character and will of God, were also equal in the divine estimation. In a word, he proves the Gentiles and Jews, whether considered nationally or individually, as "*without any difference*," respecting the great question which he discusses. He proves them "*all under sin*," and that God is equally "the God of the Gentiles and of the Jews."

3d. He, in the next place, exhibits "*the righteousness of faith*," as equally accessible to them both, as bearing the same aspect to them nationally and individually. In establishing this point, the difficulties existing between Jews and Gentiles, converted to Christianity, are decided. For, let it be admitted, that the Jews and Gentiles, *before* converted to Christianity, were *without difference*; that *when* converted to Christianity, they were *without difference* as respected the righteousness of faith; and the consequence would be, that they should, *without difference*, be admitted into the Christian communities. This is the scope, design, and termination of the argumentative part of this letter,

which closes with the end of the eleventh chapter.

But the Jews had many objections to make to the positions, which the Apostle lays down; and in exhibiting their objections, they argued from various topics, which the Apostle was obliged to discuss, before he could triumphantly establish his positions. The principal topics were—*Circumcision*, the *Covenant with Abraham*, the *Promise of Canaan*, the *Law of Sinai*, the *Election and calling of the nation as the covenanted people of God*. These embrace the chief topics of argument, and these Paul must meet and repel, before he can carry his point argumentatively.

In the third chapter he meets the first objection. He introduces the Jew, saying, "*What profit is there in circumcision upon this hypothesis?*" This objection he meets, and while he acknowledges that it was an advantage to the Jew in several respects, he shows it avails nothing against the question he discusses. That circumcision made no man righteous, he fully proves; for, in this respect, the uncircumcised was as acceptable to God as the circumcised, and in some respects the Gentile condemned the Jew. After meeting a number of subordinate objections, growing out of this one, and fully proving from David's own words, that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles; in the fourth chapter he meets the second grand objection, viz: *What do we, on this hypothesis, say that Abraham, the father of the Jews, obtained from the covenants of promise, and the works enjoined upon him?* He shows that neither his circumcision, nor any work proceeding from that covenant, was accounted to him for righteousness; but that his *faith*, which he had as a Gentile, or "*before he was cir-*

cumcised," was "accounted to him for righteousness;" and that his becoming the heir of a world, or of the promises made to him, arose not from any of the Jews' peculiarities. And while meeting their objections on this topic, he introduces those drawn from the *law*, and shows most explicitly, that neither righteousness nor the inheritance of Canaan, was derived through the law—that Abraham was righteous, or had that righteousness in which the Gentiles are now accepted, and was secured of Canaan for his seed, without respect to law: for God gave Canaan to him and his seed by a PROMISE, centuries before the law was promulged. And thus he makes the covenant with Abraham an argument in favor of his design, proving from it, that the Gentiles were embraced as his seed. And here let it be noted, that the justification by works, and that by faith, of which Paul speaks, and of which our systems speak, are quite different things. To quote his words, and apply them to our questions about faith and works, is illogical, inconclusive, and absurd.

In proof that the Gentiles were included in the promises made to Abraham, and actually participated in his faith, in the beginning of the fifth chapter, he introduces their "experience," and identifies himself with them. After detailing these, and showing that Jesus died for them, as well as for the Jews; and that they, being reconciled by his death, would, most certainly, be saved through him; from the twelfth verse to the end of the chapter, he shows the *reasonableness* of this procedure. For although the Jews might continue to cavil about the covenant of peculiarity with Abraham, he shows that the Gentiles were equally concerned with the Jews, in the consequences of

Adam's fall; and this section of the letter is decisive proof of the correctness of his arguments from the covenant with Abraham. While on this topic he expatiates on the superabundance of favor that presents itself in the Divine procedure toward mankind, irrespective of national peculiarity, in a most striking contrast of the consequences of Adam's disobedience, and the obedience of his antitype.

He meets an objection, in the sixth chapter, to the superabundance of this favor, and expatiates on it to the close; and, in the seventh, resumes the nature and design of the law, and by placing himself under it, and showing in himself the legitimate issue of being under it, proves its inefficacy to accomplish that for which the Jews argued it was designed.

In proving that the believing Jews were *not under the law*, he carries his arguments so far as to lay the foundation for the Judaizers to object that he represented the law as a sinful thing. He might say, "*Is the law sin, then?*" an apparently natural conclusion, from what he had said of its abrogation. This he refutes, and proves it to be "holy, just, and good." Then the Judaizer retorts, "*That which was good, then, was made death to thee!*" No, says Paul, but the law made *sin* death to me. This he demonstrates to the close of the chapter; in which he most lucidly represents the wretched condition of a Jew, seeking eternal life by a law which made his sins deserve death, and which he was unable to obey. The law clearly demonstrated goodness, righteousness, and virtue, but imparted no power to those under it, by which they could conform to it.

Thus he is led, in the eighth chapter, to exhibit the privileges of the be-

lieving Jews and Gentiles, as delivered from the law. In expatiating on the privileges and honors of these under the New Covenant, he represents them as the adopted sons of God, as *joint heirs* with Christ. He also shows, that while they continued in the faith, and “jointly suffered” with the Messiah, they were considered as the people of God, the called, elected, justified, and glorified ones; and that no distress nor power in the universe could separate such joint sufferers from the love of God. On this point he is most sublime. But in representing the Gentile believers as *the called* according to God’s purpose; as the elected, justified, and glorified members of his kingdom, he wounds the pride of the infidel and Judaizing Israelites, whose were the adoption, the glory of being God’s people, the covenants, the law, the worship of God, the promises, the fathers, the Messiah! He invades their prerogative. This leads him to discuss their right to be always exclusively considered the chosen people of God. He examines their arguments, points out their mistakes, and repels their objections with great ability, tenderness, affection, and zeal, to the close of the eleventh chapter.

In the ninth chapter he meets *three* objections to his leading argument:

1st. That on the hypothesis of God’s choosing the Gentile nations, in calling them to be his people, his “promises to Israel (that is, to the nation) had fallen.” This he refutes by showing *who are Israel*, in the sense of the promises.

2d. That, in choosing Jacob, and excluding Esau from the honor of being the progenitor of the nation, (as Paul represented it,) and in now excluding Israel and choosing the

Gentiles, there appeared to be *injustice* with God. Paul, from the lips of Moses, their own lawgiver, demonstrates that there was no injustice in this procedure; that his humbling the Egyptians and exalting Israel, was an act of justice as respected the Egyptians, and of merciful good pleasure as respected Israel; and that in so doing, he advanced the knowledge of his character, and exhibited his glory through all the earth.

3d. That, from the principles which Paul exhibited as the basis of this procedure, the question might be put, “*Why does he find fault, for who has resisted his will?*” The Apostle, from the just and acknowledged principle of human action, shows the wickedness of such a question; that God had carried, with much long suffering, the Jews, long since ripe for destruction, for the purpose of making their example, or his procedure to them, of benefit to the whole human race, and of rendering conspicuous his mercy to such of the nation as believed in the Messiah, as also to the Gentiles. And all this he proves to have been foretold by their own prophets.

In the tenth chapter he again exhibits the righteousness of faith, as still accessible to both people, and the fatal ground of mistake, which must consummate the ruin of Israel; and meets other objections growing out of the ancient oracles, which he applies to this case. In the eleventh he answers other objections, such as, “Has God cast off all his people?” “Have they stumbled on purpose, that they might fall for ever?” “Were the natural descendants of Abraham broken off from being his people to make room for the Gentiles?” After removing every objection to the calling of the Gentiles to be God’s people, “*through the righteousness of*

faith,” whether drawn from anything in the past election, calling, or treatment, of the Jews; from the promises made to their fathers, from their own prophets, or from the moral character of the God of all nations; after triumphantly proving the positions with which he had set out, he concludes this chapter with appropriate admonitions to the Gentile believers, against those errors which had been the ruin of Israel. He corrects some mistakes, into which they might fall, from what he had said concerning the election and rejection of Israel. From this to the close of the letter, he admonishes and exhorts the brethren in Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, to bear with, and receive one another, irrespective of those peculiarities which had formerly been ground of umbrage or alienation; that as Christ had received them both to be his people, they should mutually embrace each other as such, and live devoted to him who had called them to the high honors and privileges which they enjoyed.

Such is the scope, design, and argument of this letter. To go farther into an investigation of it, would be to assume the office of a commentator, which is foreign to our purpose. These very general hints and remarks may serve to suggest to the reader a proper course of reading and examining the apostolic letters, and to impress his mind with the vast importance of regarding the *design* of each letter, and to guard against the ruinous course of making detached sentences the theme of doctrinal expositions; and of “classifying texts” under the heads of scholastic theology—a method, the folly and pernicious tendency of which, no language can too strongly express.

Deceased

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