STUDY NOTES ON ROMANS

J. R. C. PERKIN

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TO

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CONTENTS

PREAMBLE

These notes are intended to help in the study of Romans, but they are not a commentary, nor a shortened version of any published study. What is written here is intended to help the student to use any commentary more profitably or even to help him to understand a little of Romans without further aid.

The student who is making his first study of Romans cannot do better than purchase Professor A. M. Hunter's Commentary in the Torch Bible Series (S.C.M. Press, 8/6d.). Those wishing for more detail should buy Dr. C. K. Barrett's commentary in the Black's New Testament series or Professor C. H. Dodd's work in the Moffatt commentaries. The latter is one of the truly great pieces of New Testament exegesis of our generation.

Thanks to countless sermons and many references to this " most theological epistle," this " brilliant and sustained philosophy " and so on, preachers and commentators have managed to convince most ordinary Christians that Romans is not for them.

All this is unfortunate, for the plan and basic idea of Romans is simple, as are most great Christian truths. In this study we shall try to keep clear the main line of Paul's thought, even though this may mean passing lightly over certain passages. Perhaps the gain of grasping the main outline will be greater than the loss of certain details.

One other thing must be said: the frequent attempts, both in print and pulpit, to make St. Paul perfectly consistent and preserve his " brilliant logic " at all costs, do no service either to St. Paul or his modern readers. The apostle to the Gentiles was not a logician (in our sense of that word) and like most great thinkers he raised more

questions than he answered. His presentation of many aspects of the truth made it impossible that he should not occasionally contradict himself.

So when St. Paul suddenly realizes that he is contradicting himself and changes his mind (e.g. in Romans 3: 1–8), it is best that his readers realize it as well. It is no disrespect to the Apostle to help people to understand him better by revealing him as a human being rather than the demi-god of arid theology.

At the outset, therefore, let us set down and commit to memory the four main sections of the letter. First, Paul describes the way in which sin rules everywhere, over Jews and Gentiles alike (1: 18–3: 20). Then he tells us how God has provided a remedy in Jesus Christ (3: 21–8: 39). Next, he describes the way a Christian should behave as an individual, a church member and citizen (12: 1–15:13). Man's sinful state, God's Remedy, the Resultant Life—that is the theme. Inserted into this plan are three chapters (9–11) which deal with the rejection of the Jews, a sort of lecture on history, perhaps previously prepared and put into the epistle with very little alteration. It is of considerable interest and gives us more knowledge of Paul's mind, but it is not essential to the central argument of Romans.

A PLAN FOR A STUDY OF ROMANS IN EIGHT PARTS

I. Introduction and 1: 1 – 1: 17.

II. The Sin of man 1: 18 – 3:20.

III. God's Remedy for Sin 3:21 – 3: 26 with comments on certain key words.

IV. The Working out of the Remedy 3: 27 – 8: 39. (*a*) 3:27 – 6:14.

V. The Working out of the Remedy 3: 27 – 8: 39. (*b*) 6: 15 – 8: 39.

VI. The Rejection of the Jews 9: 1 – 11: 36.

VII. The Christian Ethic; Ecclesiastical, National and Personal 12: 1 – 15: 13.

VIII. Conclusion 15: 14 – 16: 27.

INTRODUCTION AND 1:1 - 1:17

In this part we shall try to deal with seven issues.

1. St. Paul.
2. The Church at Rome.
3. Date and Place of writing of Romans.
4. The Two Recensions.
5. The Problem of Chapter 16.
6. The Importance of Romans for To-day.
7. Chapter One, verses 1–17.

1. ST. PAUL

Two books will prove of great help here—*That Man Paul* by Canon Edward Carpenter (Longman's, 3/-) and *St. Paul* by A. D. Nock (Home University Library No. 186). The first book is a little over 100 pages and beautifully written. It may be difficult to obtain, but is worth taking trouble to secure. The second work is more academic and will repay one quick reading and then a careful study.

The story of Paul's conversion is found in Acts 9: 1–31, 22: 1–21 and 26: 1–23. Other important biographical details can be found in Galatians 1 and 2 (use a modern translation) and Philippians 3.

It is valuable to secure a map of the ancient world which shows St. Paul's travels, and to look at it each time you settle to study. Place names and routes quickly become familiar.

That St. Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, wrote Romans, seems beyond reasonable doubt. In fact the letter stands with 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians as " New Testament certainties " and as such is used as a norm by which to judge other writings.

2. THE CHURCH AT ROME

Tradition speaks of Peter and Paul as the founders of the Church at Rome, but it is likely that Christianity was known there before A.D. 50. There were some disturbances in A.D. 49 which led to the expulsion of all Jews from Rome and probably these upsets were part of the trouble caused when Christianity was preached to Jewish worshippers in the synagogues. All roads led to Rome in the early days of Christianity and travel for business and pleasure was considerable. Little further explanation is needed of how the gospel came to Rome in the first place.

Certainly by A.D. 64 there were many Christians in Rome, because the Emperor Nero blamed them for a serious fire which broke out in the city. (It is not impossible that Nero himself was responsible and used the Christians as scapegoats). Thousands of Christians perished in the sharp persecution which followed.

The church to which Paul wrote was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. The inclusion of chapters 9–11 would have little point except for Jews, which such expressions as 1: 5, 1: 13, 11: 13 and 15: 15, 16 indicate the presence of Gentiles. The evidence is not sufficiently strong to justify any firm conclusion as to which group was numerically the stronger.

3. DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Romans 15: 9–25 tells us that Paul had finished his missionary travels for the time being and was ready to leave Achaia for Jerusalem, taking the gifts of money he had collected for the poor Christians there. This seems to be the situation described in Acts 20 (see especially verse 16) and would justify the assumption that Romans was written from Greece, possibly Corinth or the nearby port of Cenchreae. If Cenchreae were the scene of writing it would explain the reference in 16: 1 and the theory that Phoebe was the bearer of the letter to Rome.

As to the date, an estimate can be made with a fair degree of confidence. It can be done in two ways. First one may accept A.D. 64 as the date of Paul's death under

Nero (this is possible, but by no means certain). Allowing for two years of captivity in Rome (see Acts 28: 30) and working backwards, allowing for the three months at Malta (Acts 28: 11) and the long voyage from Caesarea (Acts 27: 1) the stay in Jerusalem and the journey from Corinth to Jerusalem (Acts 20: 16), it appears that 58 or 59 is the most probable date.

Secondly, one may take Acts 18: 12 as a fixed point and work forwards. Gallio arrived in Achaia in July, A.D. 51. Paul was on his second missionary journey at the time. Working out the third journey and reckoning for a three year stay in Ephesus, some months in Macedonia and three months in Corinth, we come again to 58 or 59 as the date of writing.

Although dogmatism would be out of place, the dual calculation makes the date of 58–59 at least a reasonable speculation.

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It seems probable that two recensions, or editions, of Romans were known in the early church. The shorter recension was Romans 1: 1–14: 23 plus the doxology in 16: 25–27. The other recension was the epistle as we now have it. The question is not who wrote chapters 15 and 16 or when or why, but whether Paul wrote the shorter recension and later expanded it or whether he wrote the version we now have and it was shortened later.

All commentaries discuss these points in some detail and it will suffice to say here that the most likely theory is that Paul wrote Romans as we now have it, but that his work was subsequently shortened by an editor who wanted to give the epistle a more general application, and so left out " in Rome " in 1: 7 and 1: 15; by a lazy copyist; or by accidental mutilation.

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that this question has nothing whatever to do with the question of the Recensions).

The reasons for queries about chapter 16 may be summed up as follows:

1. Paul had not visited Rome, yet there is a long list of names and personal greetings. It almost looks as though Paul's friends had moved *en masse* to the capital.
2. Aquila and Priscilla were in Ephesus when 1 Cor. 16: 19 was written.
3. Epaenetus is described as " the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ; a phrase more easily applicable to one in Ephesus than Rome.
4. The authoritative words of 16: 17–20 would be understandable to a church Paul knew and where he was known. It is said that he would have been less authoritative and more guarded in writing to Rome (note the tone of 1: 8 and 1: 12 in this respect).
5. Paul addresses the readers as " fellow-workers " " fellow-prisoners " and refers to a lady as his " mother."

On the basis of this it has been conjectured that Romans 16 is a separate letter, written to Ephesus, to commend Phoebe to the church and convey Paul's greetings to the church. This would account for the amount of personal material—Paul lived in Ephesus for three years and would have a wide circle of friends.

But most of the points raised may be explained without formulating a theory such as this. For instance, we have seen that the Jews were expelled from Rome in A.D. 49. Paul may have met many in his travels who afterward went back to their homes when the Emperor's decree was relaxed. We note that in 1: 2–6 Paul presents his doctrinal credentials. It may be that in chapter 16 he presents his personal referees.

Again, from what is known of ancient literature, a letter consisting almost entirely of greetings would be unheard-of. Professor Dodd quotes Leitzmann's comment "A letter consisting almost entirely of greetings may be intelligible

in the age of the picture postcard; in any other it is a monstrosity."

Finally, in 16: 16 Paul writes " The churches of Christ salute you." This makes better sense if directed to Rome rather than Ephesus (although compare 1 Corinthians 16: 19 " The Churches of Asia salute you ").

On the whole the main objection to the Ephesian theory is that it is unnecessary. But that is not proof that it is wrong and the question and theory can be stated in a variety of forms. There is probably more in the theory than most commentators to-day will admit.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF ROMANS FOR TO-DAY

No one who stops to think about the present day world and our life in it will conclude that Romans is out-dated or irrelevant to our situation. The problem of sin remains with us: that taint in human nature which affects all nations and classes, sometimes " mildly " in petty selfishness and wrong, sometimes in atrocities and brutalities too horrible to set down. Modern history, whether on a global or local scale is a stark proof of Paul's assertion " all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Yet in the midst of this there is still plenty of evidence that God is at work, touching lives and transforming them, giving them new hope and purpose in place of aimless wandering and freedom in place of slavery to sin. This is God's answer to sin, just as it was in Paul's day.

But, although there is in Christendom to-day a dangerous minority view that justification, or conversion, means an end of all problems, that shallow view finds no support in Paul's thinking. He realized that the Christian would face many problems; what we call the clash of Church and State, the question of tolerance, the problem of living in a Christian community in harmony with one another, and so on. The working out of the Christian ethic is the proof of our love and the sincerity of our faith.

Such themes as these do not grow less important as the years pass. Many aspects of Romans have striking relevance

for to-day. As we work through this great epistle we shall try to show how that is so.

7. THE LETTER—PAUL'S INTRODUCTION 1: 1–17

The last part of this section is a brief study of the opening verses of Romans. Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ, presents his credentials to the Roman church. He gives a brief outline of his doctrine of Christ—the scriptures have been fulfilled, Jesus was born in the Davidic line, showed his Sonship in the resurrection, and is willing for us to share in the fruits of his ministry.

Paul goes on to speak of the reputation the Roman Christians already have in the world and of his continual prayers for them.

Then comes a very human touch. Once launched, Paul soon says that he longs to give some spiritual gift to the Romans—then he recalls the fame of this church and his own position of being an intending " visitor," so he corrects himself very politely—" that is that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

The phrase " I am debtor " (v. 14) means " I feel myself under obligation to." Phillips (*Letters to Young Churches*: now available at 2/6 in Fontana books) renders verse 14 " I feel myself under a sort of universal obligation, I owe something to all men, from cultured Greek to ignorant savage."

Paul is proud of the gospel: it is God's *dynamis* (the Greek word from which we get such words as dynamite, dynamic, etc.) working for the salvation of men. The Jews received this first, by the very nature of their history and background. But it is also for Greeks. " Greeks " is used here not to mean " wise " or " educated " or " cultured " as in verse 14, but as synonymous with " pagan."

Verse 17 is one of the key-verses of the letter. In the gospel God's righteousness is revealed. What is this righteousness of God? Is it an attribute of God, or of men who are being saved by God?

This verse should be studied in one of the standard commentaries. We shall have reason to comment on it

later, but a few notes must be given here. God's righteousness is an activity of God. It is God " putting things right " or " vindicating the right." So when we read that " God's righteousness is being revealed " it means that God is vindicating the right by his divine activity expressed in Jesus Christ crucified and risen. This activity delivers men from the power of sin and puts them into a new relationship with God.

But there is a condition—faith. The phrase translated in the A.V. " from faith to faith " means " This is a matter of faith from start to finish."

The verse is rounded off by a quotation from Habakkuk 2: 4, variously translated " The just shall live by faith " and " He who is justified by faith (or righteous by faith) shall live."

No purpose is served by choosing one to the complete exclusion of the other, but from the context the second would seem to be the primary meaning. Once a man has, by faith, become the object of God's saving activity, he is treated as righteous by God, and because of this he will live.

QUESTIONS ON PART ONE

The student is advised to work carefully through them, make a specimen outline of each answer, and keep it for revision purposes.

1. What does " Romans " tell us about the church at Rome?
2. Give an outline of the construction of the epistle to the Romans and comment briefly on the contents of each section.
3. When and why do you think Paul wrote " Romans? "
4. How are the various endings of the epistle to be explained?
5. What reasons have led some scholars to suggest that chapter 16 may not have been part of " Romans " as it was sent to Rome?
6. Comment briefly on the following:—
   (*a*) Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.
   (*b*) I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
   (*c*) For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
   (*d*) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith.

PART TWO

THE SIN OF MAN
(1: 18–3: 20)

Paul now begins the main theme of the epistle. In this section he shows how sin has gained control over human nature. By common consent among Jews, the Gentiles were reckoned to be sinful. But Paul relentlessly shows the sinfulness of Jews as well, bringing out clearly the moral failure of the Jewish faith and dealing summarily with any objections Jews might raise. Finally he uses some Old Testament verses to clinch his indictment.

So this part falls into five sections as follows:

1. The indictment of the Pagan world (1: 18–32).
2. The indictment of the Jews (2: 1–16).
3. The failure of Judaism (2: 17–29).
4. Three Jewish Objections (3: 1–8).
5. The Complete Condemnation (3: 9–20).

1. THE INDICTMENT OF THE PAGAN WORLD (1: 18–32)

Paul says that God's wrath is being revealed against the impiety of those whose wickedness hinders the progress of the truth, i.e. the spread of the gospel. What is this " Wrath of God "?

Opinion among scholars is divided, some holding it to be a sort of impersonal Nemesis, others a personal attribute of God. The first group observes that the New Testament never says that God is angry with men (the Greek word here, *orgē*, means ' anger '). It is too anthropomorphic (i.e. attributing to God human emotions) an idea altogether. It is pointed out that God has created this world and governs it through certain moral laws. If those moral laws are disregarded or broken then evil will befall the guilty;

not because God is angry with him, but because in God's world you cannot sin and get away with it, since it is a moral order. Dodd's commentary gives the classic exposition of this view.

On the other hand there are many scholars who take the second view. Men, they say, cannot think of God except in anthropomorphic terms. We are helped by expressions such as God's love, God's smile, God's friendship; why should not the phrase God's anger be equally valuable to us? The Old Testament writers did not hesitate to say that God could be angry with men. This conception helps to retain the awful abhorrence God must feel for anything that is sinful.

Two further remarks might be made: (i) we must beware of the extremes of either view—a completely depersonalized concept of a moral law mechanically asserting itself (this is a long way from Hebrew–Christian thinking) or the idea of an angry God " taking it out of " those who disobey him. (ii) The two ideas can without difficulty be held together without illogicality. It may be that we prefer the idea of the impersonal working out of a moral law, but behind that is the divine Lawgiver, who " can't stand sin."

From verse 19 Paul launches into his theme, the indictment of the pagan world. The created order is its own evidence of the Creator (verses 19, 20), but, despite this evidence, the pagans will not acknowledge God (21). In their own little way and in their own sight they became philosophers (this is not a sneering reference to the nobler thoughts of Greece), although in reality they were displaying their own foolishness.

With the horror only a Jew could feel, Paul singles out the root offence of the pagans—idolatry (23). An inadequate object of worship means an inadequate faith, which means a low estimation of morality and right conduct. Consequently, in denying God (25) they paved the way for immoral practices (24) and became completely in the power of many kinds of sin (26–31), summarized as sexual perversion (' vile affections,' 26) and " what is not fitting " (Τὰ *μὴ καθήκοντα*—a technical phrase from Stoic philosophy).

The final scathing comment rounds off the accusation. These people know that such practices are wrong and deserve a death sentence. Yet they not only persist in doing them themselves, but they applaud or agree with others who do them (32).

2. THE INDICTMENT OF THE JEWS (2: 1–16)

" Yes," says the Jew who has listened to the charge Paul has just levelled against the Pagans, " we know that God's judgment rightly falls on those who do such things " (2).

" Good " says Paul, and then, turning to the Jew, continues, " But do you imagine that you will escape God's judgment, you who condemn those who do these things yet do the same yourself? " (3).

So Paul turns his charge of sinfulness and the focus of his description of the power of sin to the Jews. For a gospel parallel to these verses see Mt. 7: 1–5, and for the same psychology of approach see the book of Amos, where the prophet denounces the traditional enemies of Israel and then turns (Amos 2: 6f) to inform his listeners that God's judgment falls just as firmly on Israel as on other nations.

Throughout the whole of Biblical history we find the need for, and the expression of, this sentiment: that God is no respecter of persons. There was in Judaism, just as there is in Christendom, a certain readiness to condemn the outsider, while casually overlooking the fact that the same judgment falls on us.

God's wealth of kindness, forbearance and patience is intended, not to produce a fatal disregard of our own sinfulness, but to prompt us to repentance (4).

Verses 7–13 show clearly the sentiments found in Mt. 7: 24–27—it is the *doers* of God's will who receive the reward. This is in no opposition to Paul's emphasis on justification by faith (as distinct from salvation by works); the proof of justification by faith is in the kind of life lived, " by their fruits ye shall know them." The Jew may enjoy a certain priority in revelation and possible reward

(10), he also is the first to be condemned if he refuses to accept God's offer (9). See Amos 3: 2.

There is some difficulty in the order of the phrases at this point, and an easy way out of it is to transpose verse 16 to be a continuation of 13: " For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (13) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (16)

Verses 14 and 15, a little section on " natural religion " then stand on their own. It might be objected that it is hardly fair if the Gentiles, who have no special revelation, are judged with the Jews who have so many advantages (see Romans 9: 4, 5). Paul replies that such people are a law to themselves, they have a conscience by which they obey by nature (or instinctively) the requirements of the Law.

This section is powerful evidence against the doctrine of " total depravity " so often wrongly attributed to St. Paul. On the other hand it is fallacious to argue from these verses that missionary enterprise is superfluous since the heathen have a conscience and are a law to themselves.

3. THE FAILURE OF JUDAISM 2: 17–29

At this point one imagines the Jew writhing under the strength and sternness of Paul's indictment. But the Jew can at least appeal to two advantages he has over the pagan: the Law and circumcision. Verses 17–24 deal with the former, 25–29 with the latter.

The Jews were, and are, a people of the Book—a book of law, prophets and writings. They took understandable pride in the Mosaic Law, dealing, as it did with every aspect of life, from agriculture to worship, from sanitation to treatment of slaves, from sexual conduct to observance of feast-days. They sincerely believed that in the Law they had " the embodiment of knowledge and truth " (Moffatt v. 20).

This gave them a sense of mission—a light in darkness, a guide to the blind and a teacher of the simple.

The phrase " approvest the things that are more excellent" (Καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα) can be rendered in a number of

ways: " with a sense of what is vital in religion " (Moffatt); " know the difference between right and wrong " (Hunter). Phillips gives a paraphrase of verse 18, " You know his plan, and are able through your knowledge of the Law truly to appreciate moral values."

Then Paul turns in fierce attack upon these " enlightened" brethren. You teach others this Law, he says, but do you keep it yourself? He accuses the Jews of stealing, committing adultery and sacrilege. These are serious charges, and such as one would not expect to hear made against Jews; but it would have been folly for Paul to make them had there been no evidence. The word translated " commit sacrilege " (ἱεροσυλέω) is better rendered " rob temples " although whether it is the heathen temples or the synagogues is not clear.

There is only one other escape route left. Surely, protests the Jew, circumcision makes a difference? The sign given to Abraham and Moses, the sign of the promises of God, is it quite meaningless? " Quite meaningless " says Paul, " unless you keep the Law " (25). If the Jews do not keep the Law their circumcision becomes insignificant, but if pagans keep the law, then, although they do not have this outward sign, nevertheless they are to be reckoned as circumcised. For true circumcision is not an outward sign on the body, but a disposition of the heart.

To put it briefly, a good pagan is better than a bad Jew, so false confidence based on the law and circumcision is dangerous unless the law be observed and circumcision be reinforced by the observance of the law.

The sentiments of this section are closely akin to those of the gospels, especially Mt. 12: 41f: " The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment against this generation and shall condemn it." All Christians would do well to apply this passage to the churchgoers and the so-called " outsiders ", many of whom lead lives which make our Christianity seem a very weak and miserable thing.

4. THREE JEWISH OBJECTIONS (3: 1–8)

One might feel that Paul has proved his point, that both

Gentiles and Jews are sinful, but he wants to put a few more nails in the coffin of Jewish boasting. Unfortunately, that desire leads him into difficulties as we shall see.

Paul imagines a Jewish objector or heckler taking him up on some of the points implied in his condemnation of much of Judaism. Surely, it is objected, there must be some advantage in being a Jew; circumcision must bring some benefit. There is, and it does, replies Paul, and begins to list the advantages, beginning with the " oracles of God."

But this argument will not do, as Paul quickly sees. He has been saying that circumcision, unless buttressed by obedience to the law, is meaningless. He has said that a good pagan is better than a bad Jew. He has said that it is not the question of having or hearing the Law which is important, but the question of doing it. Consequently the assertion of verse 2, that Jews are better off and that circumcision is an advantage, has to be left. Paul has been illogical, sees the error and, after a few more verses, drops the whole question altogether. Chapters 9–11 are an extended discussion of the same problem.

A second objection (5) is that if the sin of man shows God's righteousness, that is good and surely sinners ought not to be punished for showing God's grace and love. But to say this is to make nonsense of the whole idea of judgment and righteousness.

A third and final attempt to preserve Jewish priority (7) is much the same as the second. Phillips again gives a paraphrase of great value in bringing out the meaning " Similarly, why not do evil that good may be, by contrast, all the more conspicuous and valuable? (As a matter of fact, I am reported as saying this very thing, by some slanderously and by others quite seriously! But of course, such an argument is quite properly condemned) " (7, 8).

Professor Dodd describes the argument of 3: 1–8 as " feeble and obscure " and indeed it is, and most unlike the Paul of forcible and incisive judgment we find elsewhere in Romans.

He abandons his case with no embarrassment, in verse

9 roundly contradicting what he had said in verse 2. "Are we Jews any better off? Not at all! " This verse completes the objections and also opens the final part of Paul's great indictment.

5. THE COMPLETE CONDEMNATION (3: 9–20)

As we have seen, verse 9 begins the last section of Paul's great charge of sinfulness brought against the whole world, Jews and pagans alike. They are " all under sin " and not a single one can lay claim to deserve the judgment " righteous " as opposed to " sinful."

There is some doubt as to the exact meaning of προεχόμεθα in verse 9, we have roughly translated " are we any better off? " but it can have at least four meanings:—

1. Do we excel.
2. Are we excelled (i.e. by the Gentiles).
3. Do we excuse ourselves.
4. Are we preferred (by God).

Whatever decision is finally taken the argument will remain the same, that Jews and Gentiles are all under the sway of sin and in that respect equal before God.

In typical rabbinic style, Paul clinches his view with quotations from the Old Testament. They come from Psalms 14: 1–3 (compare Psalm 53: 1–3); 140: 3; 10: 7; Isaiah 59: 7–8 (compare Proverbs 1: 16); Psalms 36: 1 and 107: 42. They are not all exact quotations, and may probably be a catena put down more or less from memory. The whole point of the citations is contained in verse 10, " There is none righteous, no, not one " and carried over into verse 23 " For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." That is the theme of the section we have been studying (1: 18–3: 20).

Although Paul has been saying that the doing of the law is important, he does not leave it at that; doubtless his experience of a dry legalism would prompt him to go on. No one is justified in God's sight because of obedience to the law (20); there is something else to which Paul is about to turn. But the Law does give us the knowledge

of sin; or, in Phillips' brilliant rendering " it is the straight-edge of the law that shows us how crooked we are."

The picture is a gloomy one, but a true one. Jews and Gentiles are under the sway of sin and even the law can only reveal how extensive that sin is. Of themselves they could do nothing, but when man is helpless God can begin to act, and in the next section we shall see how Paul presents God's Remedy for sin.

QUESTIONS ON PART TWO

1. Outline and discuss the argument of Romans 1: 18–3: 20.
2. By what steps does St. Paul arrive at the view that a good pagan is better than a bad Jew?
3. In what senses does St. Paul use the word " Law "?
4. Write a brief note on Paul's treatment of the theme of circumcision in 2: 25f.
5. What theological content may be given to the phrase " Wrath of God " in 1: 18?
6. Comment briefly on the following:—
   (*a*) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.
   (*b*) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.
   (*c*) And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
   (*d*) There is none righteous, no, not one.

It is a word which conjures up a picture of a law court with an accused person in the dock. The judge has heard all the evidence (amassed in Romans 1: 17–3: 20) and there can only be one verdict—" Guilty." The sentence ought to be the most severe (" the wages of sin is death ") but instead the judge " justifies " the accused—i.e. he " *reckons him and treats him as just or righteous* "—as distinct from " make righteous." To quote Dr. A. M. Hunter " *Justify* does not mean *make* righteous." " It means ' declare righteous,' ' acquit,' ' set right '."

That is the picture; the judge treats the guilty as if he were righteous. This should not be understood as " letting off," nor should we think only in legal terms, for Paul's idea is much richer than that. The image is that of a man condemned by what he is and has done, being taken into a new status and situation. The finest demonstration of this is the story of the Prodigal Son. He deserved to be condemned—he was already condemned by what he was and had done. Yet his father welcomed him back as if he were the best son in the world. He did not " let him off," still less did he make him righteous; but he did *treat* him as righteous, thus restoring the broken fellowship.

This first picture tells us *what* God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

The next tells us how He chose to do it.

The word we have translated " ransom " really means " the act of redeeming " and presents us with two pictures: that of a slave being set free on the payment of a certain sum and that of the release from bondage in Egypt or return from exile. The Jews could imagine something of the joy that a slave's release brought; they looked back with sorrow yet with thanksgiving to the exodus when the slavery in Egypt was ended and to the end of the exile when slavery in Babylon was no more.

Jesus Christ, says Paul, is the ransom, paid to give sinful man release from slavery to sin; He is the Act by which God redeemed His people.

The last picture extends the second somewhat. The picture is in the word ἱλαστήριον and therein lies a problem,

because scholars are not certain what the word means. There are two main views. The first translates the word " expiation." The A.V. rendering (propitiation) is a bad one, producing the idea of an angry or bad-tempered god being mollified by a gift or sacrifice. Dr. Dodd uses the word " expiate " and defines the biblical use of it thus " to perform an act whereby guilt or defilement is removed."

The second translation is " mercy-seat." Jesus Christ is here seen, not primarily as the act whereby guilt is removed, but the place where God shows mercy to sinful people. On this view Christ crucified represents in the new age what the mercy-seat meant in the old.

The phrase " through his blood " probably supports the second interpretation, referring to the sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat by the High Priest on the day of atonement.

Previously, says Paul, under the old order, God passed over sins, but that was purely a temporary measure, continuing only until God's great and final act was done. But now His power is displayed, and His righteousness. Men are given a new status, they are freed from slavery to sin, they see God's mercy at a set point in history.

This new manifestation proves that God is righteous and, strange yet true, will both judge sin and deliver sinners.

3. SOME KEY WORDS

We have already studied something of the meaning of the words " Justify," " Ransom " and " Expiation." This is an appropriate point at which to look briefly at certain other key words in Romans. Several of them occur in this passage. All occur frequently throughout the letter. The most important words are Law, Sin, Faith, Blood and Life. Let us look at them in turn.

(*a*) *Law.* When we hear the word in a biblical context we tend to substitute the phrase ' the ten commandments ' and leave it at that. But the Law to a Jew meant much more than that. It meant the whole of God's revelation through commands, utterances, visions and so on; the basis of the

instruction given to the ordinary folk by those specially gifted and trained. In many cases " teaching " would be an accurate substitute for the word " Law."

Paul is obviously aware of this general meaning, but, in common with most other New Testament writers, he uses the word in a more limited sense to denote the rules or legal code governing community life. This group of commands and prohibitions was intended to reveal God's grace and truth, but in fact, as interpreted by men, served largely to obscure them. Consequently Paul is driven (as in 3: 21) to contrast the law and God's further revelation in Christ. Undoubtedly there is a sharp distinction between the legalistic, cramping, pettifogging restrictions of some Jewish extensions and interpretations of the Law and the glorious freedom of the gospel, but it should be acknowledged that there is more to be said in favour of " the Law " than Christians often admit.

Another use of this same word is found in Romans 2: 14f where Paul speaks of the law which the Gentiles have within themselves. This may be a reference, although a very obscure one, to the idea that the covenant made with Noah (Genesis 8: 20f) had somehow entered into all creation, so that every part had some inherent knowledge, however small.

Finally in chapter 7, " law " is used in another sense; that of " principle." In verses 21 and 23 it has this meaning, although in other parts of the chapter it has a different sense. In this passage Paul is describing the two conflicting principles which struggle for mastery in every man's nature.

We may sum up by saying that, on the one hand Paul saw the Law as something which could serve to impede the progress of the gospel, more generally he regarded it as being at work for good where there was no faith, as helping to show man his need of God's grace and even helping Christians to discipline their lives more adequately once they have believed.

(*b*) *Sin.* " Sin, we recall, is for Paul not necessarily an act for which an individual is guiltily responsible, but an objective condition in which we come short of the glory

of God " (C. H. Dodd). Paul's use of the word sin is summed up in the phrase in Romans 3: 23 "All have sinned and all fall short of the glory of God." Each time we are in fact other than what God intended us to be, we sin.

Basically, sin is, in Bible language, " missing the mark," although two other metaphors are used in the gospels, namely, being in debt and being estranged. It is fair to say that for Paul the first idea, that of " missing the mark " or being in a condition where the image of God is lacking is fundamental.

We have seen how in Romans sin is regarded as universal, holding sway over all men. The result of sin is death and the principle of sin and death is in conflict with the principle of life. Because of a mystical solidarity which exists in the human race, Adam's sin has passed to all; the only reasonable and effective antidote is being " in Christ " whereby we share in His victory and freedom.

" The straight-edge of the law shows us how crooked we are " (3: 20, Phillips) The law shows us sin—shows us how far short we are of what God intended. Christ has died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15: 3f; Romans 4: 25). When in baptism we share in Christ's death and resurrection, then our liberation is complete.

(*c*) *Faith.* The words " faith " and " belief " are translations from one Greek word. So to believe is to have faith and vice-versa. In the New Testament we find three main uses of the word faith.

1. In James and certain other places it means " assent to something, belief that . . . " an intellectual conviction that a statement is true.

2. The expression " the faith " is sometimes used for the sum total of Christian doctrine and experience to be guarded, a sort of deposit of Christian truth.

3. Finally, the meaning most common to St. Paul—faith is the acknowledgement of our complete dependence upon God. It is belief *in* (as distinct from belief *that*, although one invariably includes the other to some extent), and committal *to*, God. The paradox of faith is that it is

a positive act by which we seek to do nothing, not even achieve righteousness, but let God do everything for us. Professor Dodd calls it " making room for the Divine initiative."

St. Paul seldom uses an object when he speaks of faith. It is assumed that the object is always God—faith in God, faith in Jesus Christ, and so on. For this reason we translated verse 25 above " God put him forward to be an expiation through his blood, appropriated by faith " and not " . . . through faith in his blood." We do not have faith in blood, but only in the God who redeems.

The man who would live must be accounted as righteous by God. This comes about through faith. The revelation of God's great vindicating activity is a matter of faith from beginning to end.

Faith, then, is the attitude of mind which takes God's promises seriously and relies entirely upon them. It is the attitude of the whole of life for the Christian and expresses itself as love to our fellow-men. Faith is man's positive act of passivity, by which he responds to the love of God in Christ.

(*d*) *Blood.* Most readers will be familiar with the idea in Hebrew thought that " the blood is the life " (Genesis 9: 4, Leviticus 17: 11, Deuteronomy 12: 23) but it is not significant of a life which can continue apart from the body. Rather the blood is the life which ends when the blood is shed.

So, generally speaking, in the New Testament, shedding blood means terminating bodily existence by death, often a violent death. The strict prohibitions against drinking blood were largely due to the fact that the blood represented the mysterious gift of life, and, as such belonged to God and so should only be " poured out " on His altar.

So the " blood of Christ " is a pictorial way of describing our Lord's violent death, the offering up of His life for men. When Paul speaks of " sharing in the blood of Christ " (1 Corinthians 10: 16) it means participating in His life as it was offered up to God.

It will be seen that a world of difference separates St.

Paul's thought about the blood of Christ from the sentimental vulgarity which speaks of " being washed in blood." The blood of Christ was the same as ours and being washed in it would have the same unpleasant results. It is only when His blood is seen as a symbol of a life laid down willingly on our behalf that it has significance in Christian theology.

(*e*) *Life.* The word often translated " soul " (ψυχή) in the A.V. could also be rendered " life." Scholars are beginning to rediscover the essential unity of the human personality in Hebrew thinking. There is no opposition between body and soul or body and life; one without the other ceased to be.

But there is another word, a favourite in the fourth gospel (ζωή) which is often used in conscious preference to the commonest Greek word of all for life—βίος (from which we get such words as biology). In St. John eternal life (ζωὴ αἰώνιος) is seen as the chief blessing coming from belief in the gospel—it is the " life more abundant " or " Life with a capital ' L '."

St Paul shares in this concept and in 6: 22 and 6: 23 he speaks of " eternal life " as the full gift of God in Christ.

So life in this fuller sense is a new principle of existence which begins, not at death, but here and now. Eternal life is a present reality, just as the death which results from sin is always present and at work. The whole of Romans from 3: 27 onwards is really concerned with this new kind of life which expresses itself in every aspect of this world's affairs.

QUESTIONS ON PART THREE

1. Explain in your own words the way in which St. Paul describes God's remedy for sin in Romans 3: 24, 25.
2. Write a brief note on the following phrase, giving an alternative translation with comments: " Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."
3. What do you think St. Paul means when he says " Being justified freely . . ." ?
4. In what ways does St. Paul see the revelation of God's righteousness?
5. Write a note on the words " blood " and " life " as they occur in Romans.
6. What does St. Paul mean by " faith " and what does he say about it in Romans 1–3?

PART FOUR

THE WORKING OUT OF THE REMEDY—I

(3: 27–6: 14)

Paul has described the fatal ailment from which man suffers. He has announced the new and certain cure prescribed by God in Christ. From 3: 27 to 8: 39 he describes how the cure works. From 3: 27 to 6: 14 the theme of justification is linked to that of salvation. All is wrought by faith, faith like that of Abraham, through which, although by natural descent we are linked to Adam and so to death, we are joined by baptism to Christ and so to life.

Our study in this part can be divided into five smaller sections as follows:—

(*a*) 3: 27–31 Immediate Results of Justification.
(*b*) 4: 1–25 The Faith of Abraham.
(*c*) 5: 1–11 Justification and Salvation.
(*d*) 5: 12–21 The First and the Second Adam.
(*e*) 6: 1–14 Baptism. Death and Life.

(*a*) IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION 3: 27–31

Paul deals very briefly with three aspects of God's remedy for sin as manifested in Jesus Christ.

The first is that boasting is excluded. "Boasting" or "glorying" was a characteristic of a certain type of Jew. It was not necessarily always objectionable, but could easily become so. The Pharisee in the parable thanked God that he was not like other people (Luke 18: 11); presumably he thought himself better, and even the rich young man (Mark 10: 20) whom Jesus loved said, without apparent embarrassment, that he had kept all the commandments all his life.

Now, however, *all* boasting is ruled out, because our justification is an act of God which cannot be earned by doing good works but depends entirely on faith. If the Law is no longer the essential basis of justification then the Jews do not necessarily have anything to boast about—" the whole matter is now on a different plane—believing instead of achieving " (Phillips).

This introduces the second aspect, implied in the last sentence: in God's justification Jew and Gentile are on equal footing. This idea is not just a casual thought inserted at this point; Paul is reminding the Jews of the inescapable logic of their own thinking. Their belief was most rigidly monotheistic—i.e. that there is only one God. This implies that He is God of all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, and if He is not a respecter of persons, they must all be on the same footing in His sight.

Finally, Paul turns to deal with a possible objection, namely, that this view undermines the whole position of the Law and renders it pointless. In a restricted sense, as St. Paul must have very well known, that is quite true, but if by " Law " we understand not so much the commands and injunctions of the Old Testament but rather its deepest principles and insights, then we can understand how he can say that he is actually upholding the Law.

This statement he develops in the whole of chapter 4 to which we now turn.

(*b*) THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM 4: 1–25

This chapter does not add very much to our present day understanding of Paul's theme, but at the time of writing was probably of vital importance to the argument Paul was developing. His Jewish readers would readily appreciate the points he makes, especially as they concern the figure held in the greatest esteem as father of the nation—Abraham.

Having said (3: 28) that justification is a thing quite distinct from the works of the Law, Paul cites Abraham as proof of his point. In opposition to those who said that Abraham was righteous because he anticipated the

Law and kept it without actually knowing it (Ecclesiasticus 44: 21 'Abraham kept the law of the most High, and was taken into covenant with him'), Paul quotes Genesis 15: 6 "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Not a matter of work or keeping the Law, but a question of faith. In other words, this righteousness is God's gift; no one can earn it, and the righteous man is not the sinless or morally upright one, but the man to whom God credits something he does not deserve and has no right to expect.

Paul drives home his point by approaching the question from a different angle. It was generally accepted that circumcision was the sign of the Law, the outward mark of the man who tried to keep it. But God counted Abraham as righteous because of his faith *before* he was circumcised. If circumcision was the mark of the true Jew, Abraham was no different from the Gentiles at the time when God reckoned righteousness to him.

To-day we are not impressed by the kind of argument that depends on the dating of certain Old Testament events. The fact that something is recorded in Genesis 15: 6 is no longer accepted as infallible evidence that it happened before the events of Genesis 17: 11, but given Paul's premises, the argument is sound enough.

The very promises made to Abraham (in which the Jews took so much delight) are not for those who are his heirs because they keep the law—for no-one can fulfil all its demands, but for those who have a faith like Abraham's. Regardless of their previous belief, those who believe will inherit the promise.

Abraham did not waver in his faith (18–22), but it grew stronger and God did not disappoint him. Instead, when descendants seemed an impossibility, God enabled Sara to bear a son. As far as child-bearing went, she was dead, or so it seemed, but God can bring life out of death. As he did so for Abraham so he can do for us, if we believe.

This chapter helps us to grasp more firmly the unity of the Bible, the fact that there is fulfilment of the Old Testament in the New and that the New cannot be properly

understood apart from the Old. Although, in one sense, all the old things were over and done with, in another the line of God's revelation is unbroken. The roots of our religion lie very deep. In some respects the faith was centuries old before our Lord came.

We also find in this chapter an insight into another meaning of faith, or rather an implication of faith—obedience. Faith demands obedience; obedience strengthens faith. But it all depends on faith.

(*c*) JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION (5: 1–11)

Justification is God's great act in Jesus Christ and it is appropriated by faith. But that is not the end of the story. Justification may be the experience of a moment; salvation is a process. Paul deals in chapters 5–8 with the outworking of justification in our lives, the tests to which it is put, the trials through which it passes and the experiences to which it leads. These tests, trials and experiences are all part of the process of salvation.

Verse one announces the theme " Justification " by faith—" Peace with God " The restlessness and striving is over, and although doubts, fears, and even death may come upon the Christian he can remain " at peace " with God.

The translations vary at this point, some reading " we have peace," others (notably the R.V. and Moffatt) " let us have peace." The difference in Greek is a matter of one letter (ἔχομεν or ἔχωμεν). Although the manuscript evidence favours ἔχωμεν—" let us have " most scholars to-day prefer the other reading " we have peace," as being nearer to what we believe to be " the mind of Paul."

Christ brings us to God in a relationship of grace and there is a deep joy in our looking forward to the revelation of God's glory. This forward-looking element is very strongly marked in Romans, particularly from this point onwards. It is called the eschatological element in Paul's theology, i.e. it is concerned with the last things, God's final manifestation of power when the whole created order is " wound up " and consummated.

Paul's thinking is always coloured by this eschatological element—it is that which gives meaning to life and gives real point to Christian ethics and morality.

Yet there is a strong present day element in all this. Eschatology has dominated post-war theology, particularly on the Continent, but it is not the whole story by a long way. Verses 3–5 speak of the present experience of the Christian disciple. We might translate this section as follows:

" Moreover we rejoice even in our troubles, knowing that troubles produce endurance; endurance produces character; and character gives rise to hope. This hope never lets us down, because the love of God floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us."

This peace (v. 1) carries the Christian through troubles or tribulations in such a way that endurance, the virtue of the martyrs, is produced. In turn endurance gives character in the sense of " fully-tested " character. The final stage is the *hope* which characterizes all Christian living. Recent years and world events have helped us to see the importance of this *hope*; we should note that in 5: 1–4 the great triad of faith, hope and love appear—in that order.

The hope we have never lets us down or disappoints us, since the love of God in our hearts is its source—not primarily our love for God, but His love for us, and, by way of response, our faith in Him.

The reference to " the Holy Spirit which has been given to us " is very probably an allusion to the gift of the Spirit made in baptism. Just how deeply the concept of baptism and its meaning is embedded in Paul's thought is shown by the early verses of chapter 6; there can be little doubt that often in the New Testament baptism and the gift of the Spirit are understood to be simultaneous, almost synonymous.

We have noticed how Paul's argument links up, one word suggesting another to him. Now the mention of God's love leads him to the greatest proof of it, that while we

were still helpless Christ died for the ungodly (6). Paul illustrates this in order to show the wonder of it.

I doubt, he says, if anyone would sacrifice his own life for a merely honest or upright man. Perhaps for a " good " man, one with beauty and strength of character which evoked response, someone would go so far as to die. But God gives the final proof of His love in the fact that Christ died, not for good people, nor even for just, honest people, but for sinners.

The word in v. 8 translated " commends " by the A.V. and " shows " by the R.S.V. is perhaps best rendered " proves." Etymologically, it may mean " puts together " or " placards." The meaning is clear from the context: here is God proving before the eyes of all the world just what His love is like.

Two major points follow from this. If God did all this for those who were His enemies, obviously now that peace is made we shall not be overtaken by His wrath. That is the negative side.

Positively, now that we are reconciled to God, we shall be saved (note the future tense) by the life of Christ. It was His death that reconciled us; it is His life which will save us. No wonder that Paul ends this section with the comment that we rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom this reconciliation comes to us.

(*d*) THE FIRST AND THE SECOND ADAM (5: 12–21)

Underlying this section is the ancient idea of the solidarity of communities and peoples. We are all involved in the sin of Adam—it is not passed on to us by physical descent but by the fact that we are influenced by environment and the lives of others. And since ' all have sinned,' all grow up in a sinful world. As human beings we are bound together on a subconscious level. One man's sin makes it easier for another to sin, and so on.

For Paul, sin entered the world by Adam's sin. The fact that we do not believe in Adam as an historical personality does not invalidate the idea. It is still true that we can

speak of mankind as "sons of Adam." Adam stands as a type of fallen humanity. The result of sin is death and so all mankind, so long as it is "in Adam" is under sentence of death.

In contrast to the sin of Adam and the Fall stands the work of Christ and His redeeming love. As death entered the world by Adam's sin, so, still by one person, life is made available (v. 17). The law comes into history between Adam and Christ, to help to show the sin of man. Sin abounded but grace superabounded. In God's mercy the old story of Adam, sin, death is replaced by the good news of Christ, grace, Life.

There is a difficulty in the opening verses of this section which arises from the fact that Paul appears to have started a sentence and left it unfinished. He began: "Wherefore as through one man sin entered the world, and through sin—death; and thus death came upon everyone (because everyone sinned) . . . " One would expect the sentence to finish, "So, also by one man, righteousness entered the world, and by righteousness—life," but Paul left his idea "in the air" and went on to something else. No doubt he dictated Romans to an amanuensis and in that case the wonder is not that he made one or two poor sentences, but that there were not many more of them, as any shorthand typist will testify!

Probably the objection that before Moses received the law there could be no sin distracted Paul's thoughts—we must judge his work by the situation in which it was written and the people for whom it was intended rather than by modern literary standards.

One final point must be made. That humanity is bound together and that evil has influence on a wider sphere than we realize is all too plain to-day. It must be repeated that the fact that Paul's argument appears to rest on the historic view of the Fall story in Genesis 3 does not affect the validity of his conclusions. The facts that Paul explained by reference to Adam are being explained in various ways by modern psychologists. But they remain facts.

A practical result of a study of this section should be

that we receive a useful corrective to over individualistic ideas of salvation and eternal life.

(*e*) BAPTISM, DEATH AND LIFE (6: 1–14)

The argument from chapter 5 continues over into this section. There Paul has stressed what God has done in Christ for those who were helpless. Here he defends that view against misrepresentation. If God does all for us, why try to be good? If God takes our sin and transforms it, why not provide the most sin possible in order that God's grace may be seen to the full? But Paul cannot let such a view go unchallenged. We are dead to sin; how can we continue to live in it? (2)

In order to illustrate his point, the apostle choses the sacrament of baptism. In baptism, he says, you were immersed; there was a kind of burial through which we are united to the death of Christ. Coming up from the water is symbolic of the Resurrection of our Lord. Baptism, then, in the first instance, can be a safeguard of certain essential Christian doctrines. Secondly, it means union with Christ.

Justice is seldom done to Paul's teaching here. Those who baptize infants are in a parlous position, since most of what the New Testament says about baptism cannot be applied where personal faith does not exist; the Baptists, who are in a good position to interpret the apostle's teaching on this point, are so afraid of so-called " sacramentalism " that they often surrender apostolic doctrine rather than re-think their position.

Let us quote Professor Dodd's comment on this passage " For here, in this sacrament, is something actually done —a step taken which can never be retraced. Before it a man was not a member of the Church, the people of God; now he is a member. If he should thereafter be unfaithful, that would not simply be a return to his former condition. Something has happened, something overt, definable, with a setting in time and space, attested by witnesses. And behind that lies a similarly definite event in the inner life. He has grown into Christ. He is now in Christ."

All this, and much more beside, is implied in baptism. What a world of difference lies between this and the formal sprinkling of an unconscious infant or the over-subjectivized Baptist emphasis where so much stress is placed on the candidates' witness that there is sometimes scarcely room for God. Baptism, as we see it here, is primarily God's act, not man's. By it we appropriate, through faith, the fruits of our Lord's passion and resurrection.

Verses 11–14 indicate the life of the Christian in the community, the fellowship of those " saved by grace." Verse 11 is better translated " So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (R.S.V.)

That phrase " in Christ " is one of the key phrases in Pauline theology. Its meaning cannot be limited to any one experience or idea but certainly it is most readily understood by linking it with baptism and the Church. The believer who is baptized is " in Christ " (see Galatians 3: 27 "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ") and this means in His Body, i.e. the Church (" we, being many, are one body in Christ," Romans 12: 5). Through the Body, which consists of individual members, Christ lives and expresses His will. So to be " in Christ " is to be a member of His body baptized into it on account of faith, sharing in His death and resurrection, and in active fellowship with other members. In this Body the Holy Spirit makes fellowship possible. It is through Him that we share in Christ's work here and shall be with Him hereafter.

QUESTIONS ON PART FOUR

1. What use does St. Paul make of the story of Abraham in Romans 4?
2. " But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Show how this verse (Romans 5: 8) may be regarded as a summary of Paul's thought up to this point.
3. Give some account of the concept of the First and Second Adam present in Romans 5: 12–21. Indicate the value of this illustration for those who do not believe that Adam was an historical figure.
4. What light does Romans 6: 1–14 throw upon St. Paul's doctrine of baptism?
5. Comment on the following:—
   (*a*) Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law.
   (*b*) Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
   (*c*) Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
   (*d*) Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

PART FIVE

THE WORKING OUT OF THE REMEDY—II

(6:15 - 8:39)

Paul's treatment of the great theme of God's revelation of His righteousness in salvation is carried on in this section. The passages we are to study now include some of the best known parts of scripture; some of the most controversial, and some of the most misunderstood.

The theme of the release from sin, which has dominated Paul's thought from 3: 21 onwards, and has been illustrated by reference to baptism, is now described in two more pictures. They are the illustrations from slavery and from marriage. Then comes the highly controversial section about the Law and sin, in which the sin of Everyman is put down in terms of Paul's own experience. We see the great conflict between sin and salvation vividly portrayed.

Next (8: 1–4) comes the announcement of God's great act of salvation and a description of life in the Spirit. The whole of the second section of Romans (3:21 – 8:39) culminates in the glorious vision of complete salvation and ultimate triumph to which the love of God can carry a man.

Our present study will be in seven parts, each one quite small, made up as follows:—

(*a*) 6: 15 – 7: 6 Two illustrations of release from sin.
(*b*) 7: 7–25 Sin and salvation—a conflict.
(*c*) 8: 1–4 God's great act.
(*d*) 8: 5–11 Life in the Spirit.
(*e*) 8: 12–25 Present suffering, future glory.
(*f*) 8: 26–30 The Spirit's help and God's assurance.
(*g*) 8: 31–39 The love that will not let go.

(*a*) TWO ILLUSTRATIONS OF RELEASE FROM SIN

1. *Slavery* (6: 15–23)

In the ancient world there were many slaves and for most of them there was little or no hope of ever being anything else. They could perhaps change masters, but they would always belong to someone. In v. 16 the word rendered " servants " by the A.V. means " slaves " (there is another word for servants, and in this case the whole point of the illustration is obscured unless the word slaves is used).

The Christians had been slaves to sin (17) but now they have a change of masters. The power of sin is broken so it can no longer be master; instead Christians are slaves to righteousness.

All this helps to answer the question posed in v. 15: "Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? " This is a variation of the question in v. 1: "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? " The freedom which the gospel brings is not to be turned into licence. It is not freedom from every known restraint, but freedom in order to do God's will. In fact it is freedom from slavery to sin, in order to be enslaved to righteousness (18). No sooner has Paul written this than he realizes that it is hardly the way to speak of the Christian life; so he apologizes for the illustration (19).

Previously, Paul says, you were whole-hearted servants of sin; now you are equally enslaved to good. Instead of results of which one would be ashamed this new service brings Christian development ending in eternal life.

Let Professor Hunter sum up the last verse for us. " The wage Sin pays his man is death; but the free gift God gives His servant is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2. *Marriage* (7: 1–6)

This illustration is concerned primarily with release from the law. There are two ways of looking at this section. (Professors Dodd and Hunter are again on opposite sides). One way is summed up thus by Hunter: " Likewise, we are freed from the law. Death ends law's power, as you can

see from the example of a woman whose husband has died —by the death the living gains freedom. So with us. A death—Christ's—has taken place, and as a result, we who have died with Him are free to live the new good life God expects of us." So, viewed in general terms, the illustration is a helpful little sidelight.

Against this Dodd has written: " The illustration, however, is confused from the outset . . . To make confusion worse confounded, it is not Law, the first husband, who dies: the Christian, on the other hand, is dead to the Law . . . we shall do best to ignore the illustration as far as maybe and ask what Paul is really talking about in the realm of fact and experience."

Although Hunter's view has considerable appeal it seems likely that Dodd is right and that Paul's illustration is a poor one. When a man dies his wife is free to marry again. Likewise, if the Law dies (or is brought to an end) the Jew can join himself to the new code of the Spirit. But, Paul says, the Christian has died with Christ (4), and therein lies the root of the confusion.

In verse 4 the words " dead to the Law by the body of Christ " may a reference to baptism (compare 6: 1–14) in which case " Body " should have a capital letter, and then it refers to the church.

Whatever our judgment on the illustration, v. 6 sums up the experience; instead of being " held down " (either by the Law or our own sinful state) and dead we can now serve in the Spirit.

(*b*) SIN AND SALVATION—A CONFLICT (7: 7–25)

This is one of the truly dramatic and profound passages of the New Testament. It begins with the acknowledgment that it is through the Law that sin is known. Through the commandments men know what is wrong and are often provoked to do things, merely by the command not to do them. From v. 9 Paul seems to be referring to the three stages in Jewish life (1) the age of innocence, before the child knew the Law; (2) the age (about 13 onwards) when the boy became a son of the commandment and began

to know the Law; (3) manhood in which the keeping of the Law produces freedom.

He seems to be describing his own pre-Christian experience, for he goes on to describe the unending struggle between good and evil in his life. The desire to do good is often nullified by the actual practice of evil. It is as though two principles were warring against one another in his life—the mind deciding to do one thing, the pull of the flesh making him do the other (second half of v. 25 should most probably be joined to v. 23). Who can deliver a man from such a state? Praise be to God—He can, in Christ!

Thus presented it seems very simple, but there are two involved questions. Is this passage really autobiographical? Is Paul describing his pre-Christian or Christian experience?

In answer to the first question it can be fairly confidently asserted that Paul is speaking of himself. He rarely uses the first person singular and when he does so it is usually to add the force of personal experience. Again, the moving conclusion of v. 24 and 25 seems to indicate a stress of emotion arising from the examination of his own position. The whole section reads like autobiography. True, it does not end there. The apostle generalizes from his own experience, but that is because in essence the life of Paul is the life of Everyman.

The second question is more difficult. At first sight the passage 14–23 seems obviously pre-Christian experience, but on a closer look one notices that all the tenses are no longer past but present. Yet is "sold under sin" (14) a very probable description of Paul's Christian state?

It may be objected that the uncertainty and the inward struggle revealed in this passage can be found elsewhere (e.g. Cor. 9: 26f; Phil. 3: 12–14) and probably formed part of Paul's own Christian makeup. By contrast the kind of wrestling and agonizing conflict portrayed here would seem out of place in those epistles.

So the discussion may go on. Every view may be countered with one which indicates the opposite. Ultimately on such issues as this, most of us make the final choice on grounds, not of scholarship but of personal sentiment.

For some the Christian life is a struggle such as Paul describes; for others Christianity has meant the end of that kind of struggle.

The safest course is not to try to hold both views at once, but to acknowledge that our choice of one is based on ignorance as much as anything else and to use the other view as a corrective to undue emphasis either way.

As if to open the way for the great theme of chapter 8 Paul rounds off this section with a dramatic act of thanksgiving that God in Christ delivers man from death.

(*c*) GOD'S GREAT ACT (8: 1–4)

The key word of chapter 8 is " Spirit," the word which appears five or six times in chapters 1–7 and over 20 times in chapter 8. Much has been written about the use of this word in the New Testament but we must confine our comments to this chapter. For Paul it seems that " Spirit " often describes " the divinely given power to live after the pattern of Christ "—the supernatural element in the human personality which fights against the influence of our impure desires. The test of the presence of the Spirit is the love which is manifested by the Christian in the Church and the world.

We should not assume too readily that Paul sees " the spirit " as the antithesis of " the flesh." It is more likely that the flesh is to be regarded as morally neutral, but taken over by sin as a bridgehead from which to take the whole person.

" There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." So Paul sums up God's great act of salvation. The opening chapters breathed an air of gloom and condemnation (" *all* have sinned "), but for those who are " in Christ " the sentence is lifted. The flesh (that is sin expressing itself through the flesh) no longer dictates the direction life shall take. The Spirit does this.

Formerly the Law had been concerned with sin, but its exponents and adherents were sinful; now God Himself has acted. His own Son came, not " made flesh " as the

Fourth Gospel says, but " in the likeness of sinful flesh." Obviously Paul would not say " made flesh " in view of the things he has implied about the connection between flesh and sin. He is concerned to preserve our Lord's complete humanity and His sinlessness as well.

Christ came " for sin " (v. 3). The Greek here probably means " as a sin offering " to be understood in the Old Testament sense.

The theme stated, Paul now turns to discuss the meaning of life in the Spirit.

(*d*) LIFE IN THE SPIRIT (8: 5–11)

Like a terrier coming back to shake a dead rat Paul seizes again the idea of the two principles fighting for the upper hand in the human personality. But it is not just a case of repetition; his ideas develop in important ways in this section.

The slaves of the flesh have their interests in the flesh and the penalty of this is death. Those born of the Spirit are concerned chiefly with the affairs of the Spirit (they are in psychological language the " dominant sentiment ") and the result is life and peace.

Then come the phrases, " Spirit of God," " Spirit of Christ " and " Christ in you," used in such ways as to indicate that they are expressions of the same reality. It is dangerous to assume knowledge of how St. Paul reached this equation, but it is likely that he began by thinking of the sovereignty of God who is over all, fully expressed in Christ. The Spirit of Christ is Christ's " other self " as in the fourth gospel, and this Spirit animates the Body of Christ, the Church, in which we have fellowhip through baptism.

v. 11 should be read in the light of 1. Cor. 15.

(*e*) PRESENT AND FUTURE (8: 12–25)

The first part of this section (12–17) is concerned with the new status of those who live in the Spirit. The antithesis death-life is used again; by the Spirit, says Paul, a man can put to death his sinful body and so gain life.

Those whose lives are governed by the Spirit of God are God's sons—not by natural status, but by adoption. God takes us, slaves of sin, gives us freedom and then adopts us as sons, with all the appropriate privileges and responsibilities.

Probably we should put a full stop after " adoption " in v. 15 and then read, " When we cry, Abba, Father, the Spirit himself is bearing witness . . . " Notice the close similarity of ideas as expressed in Galatians 4 : 1–7 where Paul also appeals to the language Christians used to show them the depth of their experiences.

The fact that in v. 14 we have the words, " *as many* as are led " should not lead us to the idea of God's selection of certain people. He will " adopt " all who will accept sonship from Him. As Professor Dodd sums it up: " God is the ' Father ' of all men, but all men are not His ' Sons '."

If our present status is sonship our present expectation is of suffering. But this suffering seems very light and impotent when compared with the glory that we shall see revealed. Paul then turns to the redemption of all nature. " We have heard Paul declaiming against the vices of the age like a satirist, speculating on the knowledge of God and the conscience of man like a philosopher, arguing from scripture like a Rabbi, and analysing experience like a psychologist. Now he speaks with the vision of a poet " (Dodd).

We long for final glory. All nature longs and waits for it " with outstretched head " (v. 19). In Genesis 3: 17 we read of the " fall of nature "—something seems to have gone wrong even in the created order which means that there is cruelty, death and incompleteness. Just as God will reveal His glory to His sons, so He will lift up and release His creation from the ancient curse.

The fall in nature is a subject too vast for treatment here; suffice it to say that many leading thinkers have always held that nature has somehow been involved in a cosmic fall, has been restored in principle by the work of the Cosmic Christ and will one day be restored to

perfection in fact. Of the fall in nature Gen. 3: 17 and Romans 8: 17 are but poetic comments. The truth is undoubtedly there; but it is spiritual truth and not historical fact.

(*f*) THE SPIRIT'S HELP AND GOD'S ASSURANCE (8: 26–30)

There are here two little sections: 26–27 and 28–30. The first assures us of the Spirit's help in times when words seem empty and a mockery. Then, with sighs too deep for words, the Spirit prays within us, and God, who is not concerned with long prayers or nice phrases, looks on the heart and knows the prayer (compare Matthew 6: 5 and Luke 12: 12).

The second states the ground for Christian confidence. Unfortunately the oft quoted verse, framed on so many Victorian drawing room walls, "All things work together for good to them that love God," is very likely a wrong translation or a misunderstanding of the true meaning. In the Revised Standard Version and Dr. Moffatt's translation we find that " God " is made the subject of the sentence instead of " all things." The R.S.V. reads, " We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose."

There are good reasons for preferring this rendering. In the first place all things do *not* work together for good for the Christian, in fact many Christians seem to be dogged by a series of unfortunate events throughout their lives.

Secondly, many manuscripts have " God " as subject of the sentence and "All things " can be accusative as well as nominative.

Lastly, the R.S.V. translation appears to fit the apostle's ideas better, so far as we can judge them.

God, then, co-operates in everything with those who love Him with a view to good. " Those who are called according to His purpose " is another way of saying " those who love Him "—the first described the state from God's side, the second from ours.

Verses 29 and 30 speak of the working of God's love. From the beginning it knows man to make him like Christ—

a son of God (although in man's case an adopted son). God calls, justifies and glorifies.

But what of this word, " predestinate "? Are some born to be saved and others to be damned? The idea of a God who calls into being creatures merely to destroy them will not square with the idea of a God of love. When Paul says some were predestinated to be like Christ, he is not speaking philosophically from his deep speculation. He is speaking from experience. For the Christian who looks back nothing is chance; God's hand can be seen " predestinating " him. As Professor Dodd reminds us, the best commentaries on this passage are the great hymns of the faith. Perhaps the classic example is " God moves in a mysterious way."

(*g*) THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET GO (8: 31–39)

Very little need be said on this great passage. It is as though Paul has thought back to the unrelieved gloom of the early chapters and then is overcome again by the sense of what God has done in Christ. What follows from all this? The power of sin is broken—it cannot condemn us. Death too can be changed into life. What is left to condemn us? Only Christ, and our experience of Him is that He wishes to bring life and justification not death and condemnation.

The love of Christ (35) or the love of God (39), it does not matter how we express it. This love holds a man through suffering (as well Paul knew—see 2 Cor. 11: 23ff) sorrow and death. The present cannot overwhelm him nor the future make him afraid. Such certainty can only be accepted or dismissed; there is no middle way.

Paul has presented his gospel—the sin of man, God's remedy and the working out of that remedy. We have studied the greatest attempt to present the gospel in careful and yet passionate terms. The apostle deals next with the rejection of the Jews and then deals briefly with the Christian ethic which stems from the root of redemption in Christ.

QUESTIONS ON PART FIVE

1. Outline and criticize St. Paul's illustrations from slavery and the marriage law in Romans 6: 15–7: 6.
2. How does St. Paul use the terms " flesh " and " Spirit " in Romans?
3. Comment on the " I " of Romans 7.
4. Examine the statement: " In Romans 7: 13–25 Paul is describing his experience as a Christian."
5. Write a note on Paul's idea of " adoption."
6. Comment briefly on the following:—
   (*a*) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
   (*b*) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.
   (*c*) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
   (*d*) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.

PART SIX

THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS
(9:1 – 11:36)

Chapters 9 to 11 seem to stand apart from the rest of Romans. They can be omitted without serious damage to the understanding of Paul's theme, although they do provide material for the understanding of his mind and thought.

Implicit in much of the first eight chapters has been the idea that the Jews were in no better a position than the Gentiles. But God chose the Jews to be the instrument of His will. Why then have the Jews rejected the gospel? Why did God allow them to refuse His fuller revelation in Christ? Is it just that the nation which underwent slavery in Egypt and exile in Babylon and which had guarded its faith most jealously should now, very largely, be excluded from the new way of salvation?

It is such questions as these which the apostle sets out to answer. Professor Dodd suggests that in this section we may have a sermon used by Paul on other occasions. The opening and closing verses remind the reader of a sermon and the style is that of speaker to hearer rather than writer to reader.

The sermon, like thousands of more recent ones, has an introduction, three main points, and a conclusion. We shall take those divisions and study the chapters under the following headings.

(*a*) 9: 1–5 The theme of Rejection and Paul's sorrow.
(*b*) 9: 6–29 The sovereignty of God.
(*c*) 9: 30 – 10: 21 The Process of Selection and Human Free Will.
(*d*) 11: 1–32 Fulfilment: Jew and Gentile Together.
(*e*) 11: 33–36 In Praise of God's Wisdom.

(*a*) THE THEME OF REJECTION AND PAUL'S SORROW (9: 1–5)

These first five verses can be easily understood with very little comment although there are two important points which demand mention.

Paul speaks of his great sorrow at the way in which the Jews refused to believe that the Messiah had come. He never forgot his Jewish background nor his debt to it and there was so much that Judaism had to be proud of. The very name Israelite shows their value in God's eyes (cf. Genesis 32: 28); the adoption means they are potential sons of God (cf. Exodus 4: 22 " Israel is my son, my firstborn "); the glorious presence of God was with them from the wanderings in the desert; God had made covenants with them, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses; he had given the Law to Moses on Sinai, a Law the observance of which had been such a feature of the nation's life (cf. Psalm 119); the Jews had the service of God, i.e. the wonderful rites of Temple worship; the promises were made to Abraham and other holy men—promises of the coming of a messiah and the establishment of God's will and reign over all the earth; the fathers too, the great figures we read of in Hebrews 11, were champions of the Jewish faith, and, last of all, at least as far as natural lineage goes, there comes Jesus himself, of Jewish parentage and upbringing.

So Paul grieves over such a people, a race who seemed to have everything yet rejected the fulfilment of all they had ever sought.

The two points for special notice occur in verses 3 and 5. In verse 3 we have the classic statement of the pure missionary spirit. Only in two places does the Bible reveal this attitude in God's human servants—here and in Exodus 32: 32. In the O.T. passage Moses, sick with grief at the apostasy shown in the worship of the golden calf, says to God, " Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written." If they must die, Moses will die *with* them. Paul will go further—he would die *for* the Jews if he could, if his death would mean their salvation. He is willing to

forgo his own salvation and be cut off from Christ, if it would mean that the Jews would believe. Here is the death blow to any selfish element in mission work and also to any over-individualistic ideas of salvation!

In verse 5 the translator has an acute problem. In the Greek MSS. there is no punctuation or spacing. Each word joins the next, there being no commas, question marks, full stops or paragraphs. Consequently it is sometimes very difficult to decide where a full stop should go. The Greek text of verse 5 can be punctuated in five different ways, but the problem rests on a simple decision. Did Paul call Christ " God " or not? Did he mean " The patriarchs are theirs, and theirs too (so far as natural descent goes) is the Christ. (Blessed for evermore be the God who is over all) "? (Moffatt) or " 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 "? (Phillips)

Older commentators following the A.V. and R.V. always preferred the latter, the round assertion that Christ was " God, blessed for ever." More recent works, however, have shown a tendency to put the full stop after Christ, making the Jewish nationality of Christ the culmination of the list of Jewish advantages. The rest of the sentence: " God who is over all be blessed for ever " is then a little doxology at the end of Paul's introduction of his theme. The R.S.V. gives this rendering. Nowhere does Paul speak of Christ as " God " and there can be little doubt that the more recent view is the better.

(*b*) THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (11: 6–29)

In the first part of this passage Paul attacks the view that God's promises mean that the whole of Israel must be saved. There seems, he says, to have been a kind of selection going on in history. Isaac was preferred before Ishmael in the divine purpose; similarly God chose Jacob, despite all his weaknesses, in preference to Esau, the elder brother.

So God's word has not failed. Not all the descendants of Israel are children of the promise, otherwise the Arabs

(descendants of Ishmael) and the Edomites (descendants of Esau) are on equal footing with the Jews.

In verses 14–21 Paul disposes of the objection that if God chooses just as he pleases, he cannot act fairly. In reply he says that God's mercy does not count merit or desert, but is given at God's will. The R.S.V. brings out the point very clearly in verse 16: " So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy."

The converse of this is that God also makes hard the heart of those he wishes to be stubborn (17–18). This thought is not a very exalted one, nor will it find favour in the eyes of many to-day, but what Paul is concerned to show is the absolute sovereignty of God, who can do as He pleases, yet always act justly.

Understandably, the next objection is: "Then why does He go on finding fault? Who can oppose His will?" (Moffatt). If, for instance, God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, surely He cannot blame Pharaoh for being hard-hearted?

Paul, if one may be so bold as to say it, seems to have gone too far and he knows it. His position is one which could only be justified by some final word to silence all objectors. So he concludes: " Who are you, a man, to answer God back?" The potter has absolute authority over the clay. But it will not do—the problem cannot be solved as easily as that. " . . . the trouble is that man is not a pot; he *will* ask 'why did you make me like this?' and he will not be bludgeoned into silence. It is the weakest point in the whole epistle." (Dodd)

The final verses of this passage (22–29) are difficult to translate and understand. Moffatt's translation brings out the meaning as well as any. The difficulty arises partly from the fact that Paul is not very confident of his argument. There are two main ideas: that although some are ready for destruction yet God is very patient with them, and that in its positive aspect God's plan is seen to include all the chosen ones.

There Paul breaks off and enters upon the second main point of his sermon.

(*c*) THE PROCESS OF SELECTION AND HUMAN FREE WILL (9: 30 – 10: 21)

Here we find the apostle pointing out that the Jews have gone a long way towards rejecting themselves in time past. He comes back to his earlier idea that some Gentiles, without a detailed Law to guide them, came very close to the righteousness which comes by faith.

The Jews, by contrast, seeking life in the works of the Law and not by faith " stumbled." The stumbling-block or rock of offence referred to is Jesus the Messiah. The two O.T. texts quoted here, Isaiah 28: 16 and 8: 14 are quoted again in 1 Peter 2: 6–8 and it would appear that what Professor Hunter calls the " Stoneship " of Christ was often used by the early Christian preachers in their discussions with the Jews.

In 10: 1–13 we have two ideas set in contrast to one another: the way of the Law which came through Moses and the way of faith in Christ. The familiar idea of righteousness occupies verses 1–3 and then comes the statement that " Christ is the end of the Law." The Law as a way of salvation is now finished; those who seek salvation will need to look elsewhere than in the Law.

The way of Moses required performance of the many commands and observance of the many prohibitions of the Law. The way of Christ requires faith. There is no need to go up into heaven or down to the under-world. The confession of Christ's lordship and belief in his resurrection are adequate—these are the elements of a saving faith.

This way of faith is open to all; Jews and Gentiles alike will learn by experience of God's great goodness and will come, through faith, to salvation.

Paul now analyses the disobedience of Israel. (14–21), in answer to a possible objection that perhaps some of the Jews have not heard the gospel. To refute this the apostle asks a series of questions and then quotes O.T. passages in answer to those queries. There is a chain of reasoning, linked together carefully in order to see what has " gone wrong " with the plan for the Jews' redemption and who is to blame.

(i) Linking with verse 13; what is necessary before a man can call on Christ as Saviour?
Answer—Belief.

(ii) What is necessary to bring a person to the point of belief?
Answer—Hearing (i.e. hearing the gospel preached).

(iii) What is necessary in order that a person may hear the Good News?
Answer—A Preacher.

(iv) What is implied in the arrival of the preacher and his proclamation?
Answer—that he is sent by God.

So the chain begins with man and ends with God. Now the Jews have not believed, so there must be a break in the chain somewhere. Paul now begins at the end with (iv) to show that God's end is complete.

Verse 15, " How pleasant is the coming of men with good news " (Moffatt), implies the *sending out* of the preachers. Point (iii) is also implied in verse 15 and 16 as well. So men have been sent, and those men have been preachers.

What about point (ii)? Have the Jews heard? Again another O.T. quotation is used to prove that they must have heard—verses 18, 19 and 20.

Three links in the chain are sound—what about the first? Do the Jews believe? No! Here is the weak point. Another verse from Isaiah drives home Paul's conclusion: men have been sent by God, they have been preachers; they have preached and the Jews have heard; it is their unbelief which has brought about their rejection.

This kind of argument may not commend itself to us—indeed it is to be hoped that it does not—but no doubt it was the kind of approach calculated to have the greatest impact on Paul's Jewish hearers, who would no doubt be deeply impressed by the O.T. support he called on for proof of his points.

So Paul has defended the absolute sovereignty of God and shown how by unbelief the Jews have really rejected themselves. We turn now to the last point in his sermon.

(*d*) FULFILMENT: JEWS AND GENTILES TOGETHER (11: 1–32)

The last chapter concluded on rather a gloomy note: the self-rejection of the Jews. This last major point in the apostle's sermon is on a brighter theme. We may find three sections:

(i) The Elect Remnant (1–12).

(ii) The Ingrafting (13–24).

(iii) God's Universal mercy (25–32).

(i) *The Elect Remnant* (1–12)

This section is self-explanatory. Paul sees in the present situation a similarity to that of Elijah's day, when 7,000 refused to participate in idolatory. The Jewish Christians are seen as the " Remnant " in the apostle's own time, a small number who regarded faith and not works as the essential to salvation. (The second half of verse 6 should probably be omitted with the R.S.V.—it does not appear in most MSS.)

When the Jews see the Gentiles reckoned among God's chosen people it will probably make them jealous, and provoke the unbelieving Jews to envy which may result eventually in their salvation (v. 11).

(ii) *The Ingrafting* (13–24)

We now have a section on the connection between the Jews and the Gentiles. First the apostle speaks of his own work as an apostle to the Gentiles wondering if his service might provoke his fellow Jews and help in their salvation. One can imagine that Paul's conduct might provoke the Jews, but that they would long to be like him seems rather in the realm of wishful thinking.

The salvation of the Jews is described (v. 15) as nothing less than life from the dead—the prodigal son back in the Father's house.

From verse 16 there are two illustrations, the first a short one of one verse. Some light is thrown on this verse by Numbers 15: 20–21. By making an offering to God of some of the dough, the whole lump was consecrated.

Similarly, through the loyalty of the patriarchs and the remnant all Israel was still holy.

The second illustration is longer (17–24). The olive tree represents the people of God, the rich root is the tradition and witness of the holy men of old. " Some of the branches were broken off " (17) i.e. some Jews did not believe, so a grafting-in took place. The Gentiles who believed were put in to replace the unbelieving Jews. The Gentiles thus taken up were immediately made partakers in richness of the Jewish heritage.

The Gentiles are obviously in no position to be proud (20 and 21). All they had derived from Judaism (even the Christian faith grew in Jewish soil). The two sides of God's nature clearly brought out in the whole of Romans are mentioned here again—his goodness and his severity. As Isaiah said (45: 21) " a just God and a Saviour."

The final point is that if the Jews came again to belief they would be grafted back into the stock. This observation (ignoring the fact that the olive branches would die if cut off and so could not be put back in) and the fact that wild slips are not grafted into a cultivated plant but vice versa, show that St. Paul either did not know anything about horticulture, and was only concerned to make a point; or that the point of the illustration lies in the unnaturalness of the operation.

As Professor Dodd reminds us, St. Paul's use of illustration is rather casual. He is more concerned to make his point than have a good illustration. This is probably the best attitude to adopt towards illustrations generally—so long as they serve the purpose, all is well.

(iii) *God's Universal Mercy* (25–32)

In these verses Paul lets his hearers into a secret, a truth coming not by speculation so much as by revelation (25). This " mystery " is that the hardening of Israel's heart is not for always. When the whole Gentile world has been incorporated into the People of God, then all Israel will be gathered in as well.

The remaining verses are admirably summed up by

Professor Hunter when he writes, " Thus a parallelism can be traced in the destinies of both Gentiles and Jews. In both (though not at the same time) a day of disobedience is succeeded by a day of mercy. The disobedience of the Gentiles ended when God, in His mercy, offered them the gospel, and they accepted it. Then it was Israel's turn to be disobedient. But for Israel too will dawn the day of mercy. God has shut up all, first Gentiles and then Jews, in the prison of disobedience, that in the end He may show mercy to all."

Here we come face to face with the question of Universalism. Roughly speaking, Universalism is the doctrine that, ultimately, all will be saved; that a good and gracious Father cannot and will not destroy His own creation, but will go on giving His children a chance to repent until they accept His love and salvation.

The verses we have just studied, especially 26 and 32, are key texts in the system of those who say that St. Paul was a Universalist. On the other hand there are plenty of verses in Paul's letters which speak of the death of sinners and the serious consequences of rejecting the gospel. The early part of Romans does not seem to hold out much hope for those who will not repent and believe.

Did Paul believe in a " second chance " after death? Did he believe that all will be saved? The answer is that we don't know. Certain Christians will become very troubled at the thought of a " second chance " as though the added possibility of repentance somehow causes them sorrow. We do not know God's will on this issue and to pretend that we do is insufferable pride.

One might suggest that Paul did not know it either. Consequently, Romans 1–3 is anything but universalist whereas the clear implication of ch. 11 v. 26 and 32 *is* universalist whether Paul meant it to be or not.

From a practical point of view, the implication is fairly obvious. There may be a " second chance " after death, or all may ultimately be saved. But as we cannot be certain we take no risks, but ourselves believe now and try to persuade others to do so. Consequently universalism may

be seen as a possible theory, but certainly not one which destroys all missionary purpose and zeal.

(*e*) IN PRAISE OF GOD'S WISDOM (11: 33–36)

Paul has established God's sovereignty, safeguarded man's freedom of choice and held out the hope of the ingathering of Jews and Gentiles together. The vision of the salvation of all mankind is one which moves him to break into a great expression of praise and wonder at the wisdom and love of God.

In this doxology are enshrined four great Christian truths of which we must ever remind ourselves.

(i) Some of God's ways are mysterious and so we shall never know it all in this life (33).

(ii) Inevitably then, we must beware of pretending to know more than God (34).

(iii) God doesn't *need* our gifts and service—He could do without us, but in His mercy has chosen to use us (35).

(iv) He stands over all, and without Him nothing has existence or meaning.

So Paul ends his lecture or sermon on the purpose of God in history. As has been said, it is not an essential part of Romans, but it gives us considerable insight into Paul's mind. Before passing on to chapter 12 the reader is well advised to revise the development of ideas to chapter 8 and then regard 12 as a continuation of 8.

QUESTIONS ON PART SIX

1. Outline the argument of Romans 9–11.
2. Write a note on St. Paul's use of metaphor or illustration, giving at least four examples.
3. Comment on " St. Paul's Universalism."
4. What part in the argument of Romans is played by Old Testament quotations?
5. What is St. Paul's Doctrine of the Remnant?
6. Comment briefly on the following:—
   (*a*) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
   (*b*) Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
   (*c*) 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.
   (*d*) For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

PART SEVEN

THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC— ECCLESIASTICAL, NATIONAL AND PERSONAL

(12: 1 - 15: 13)

Some of our previous comments may have tended to give the impression that salvation is a very passive process. True, faith is a complete reliance on God, a conscious decision to let God do everything; but there is another side to all this. No man can believe in God, can believe that in Jesus Christ there is salvation and freedom from sin, can be strengthened by the power of the Spirit, without wanting to *do* something.

If the earlier chapters of Romans have spoken of believing, 12: 1 onwards speak of behaving. The Christian will have to learn to live in fellowship with other Christians. He will have to make decisions as a patriot, and there will be dozens of little personal decisions to be made every day. In all of these situations he must try to act *as a Christian.*

In this section we shall be considering Paul's ethical teaching—i.e. his thoughts about conduct. It is essential that this practical teaching be seen, not as distinct from the earlier chapters, but as their natural outcome. To quote Dr. Barrett, this is not a case of " good works returning, as it were, by the back door after their formal expulsion; it is best understood as an exposition of the obedience which is an essential element in faith (1: 5) and of the gratitude which redeemed and justified man is bound to feel towards the merciful God."

Professor Hunter provides a very good introduction to this section in his commentary, and the student would be well advised to study it.

We shall divide the passage up as follows:—

(*a*) The Basis of Christian Ethics (12: 1–2).
(*b*) The Christian Ethic—in the Church (12: 3–21).
(*c*) The Christian and the State (13: 1–7).
(*d*) The Law of Love (13: 8–10).
(*e*) Eschatology and Ethics (13: 11–14).
(*f*) Toleration and Love (14: 1–23).
(*g*) Unity in Love (15: 1–13).

The whole of chapter 12 should be read in Phillips' translation. It is not, in the strictest sense, a translation, but it gives the sense of the Greek in a remarkably clear way; in fact, one might even go as far as to say that Romans 12 is the best of Phillips. When the reader has read it two or three times, there is little a commentary like this need add.

Let us now, however, look briefly at these verses.

(*a*) THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS (12: 1–2)

There are one or two words in these verses which admit of two or more translations. Dr. Barrett renders: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by God's mercies, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God; this is the spiritual worship you owe him. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may try and approve what is the will of God, what (that is) is holy and acceptable and perfect."

As a result of, and in response to, all that God has done and is doing (chapters 1–11), we must offer *ourselves*, not some indefinite part of us, such as the "soul," but our whole selves, to God. Paul's language here is sacrificial in background and so he can call on Christians to offer themselves on the altar of service.

The words translated "spiritual worship" by Dr. Barrett, and "reasonable service" by the A.V. are of importance (λογικὴ λατρεία). It is worthy of careful note that the oft-used modern distinction between "spiritual" and "rational" and "worship" and "work" is quite foreign to the original language. The spiritual and the rational or reasonable are identical as are work and worship.

The Christian will not allow the world or the present age to form his life for him; rather he will allow the mercies of God to change or transform his mind. The proof of this renewal will be in the new life to be lived, a life of doing God's will. Professor Leonard Hodgson of Oxford often sums up the Christian life as " seeking, finding and doing, the Father's will."

A life handed over to God, a mind renewed by God, actions performed for God—this is the basis of Christian ethics.

(*b*) THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC—IN THE CHURCH (3–21)

The place where we learn of true Christian conduct is in the Church: there forgiveness is the hallmark of relationships, the overwhelming sense of God's presence produces a sane humility, and there the various gifts possessed by members are exercised to the full.

Verse 3 may indicate that the Roman Christians did tend to think a little highly of themselves. There are many strange ideas current about Christian humility. It must suffice here to observe that it is a by-product of a sense of God's nearness and greatness. Phillips is illuminating here: " Try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all."

The concept of the Body, developed elsewhere by the apostle (see especially 1 Corinthians 12: 12–31) really dominates this chapter, verses 4 and 5 being the key to what follows. Paul lists seven gifts (6–8) which are given to men by the Spirit—we may understand them as preaching, service, teaching, encouragement (this one is very often overlooked), generosity, responsible administration, acts of mercy. The key stone to the whole lot is love, genuine and pure (in v. 9 Phillips renders: " Let us have no imitation Christian love.") It has frequently been suggested that " caring " is the best modern English rendering of the word ἀγάπη, and that choice is an apt one, more particularly in this generation, when it can stand in contrast to the " I couldn't care less " attitude commonly adopted.

Paul shows how this love expresses itself (10–21) and

this section recalls many phrases from the Sermon on the Mount, especially Mt. 5: 44.

Despite this difference of ministry, there will be a " common mind " (16) in the fellowship (cf. Phil. 2: 2). Verse 17 " Provide things honest in the sight of all men " is well summed up by Phillips: " See that your public behaviour is above criticism."

The chapter ends with quotations from Deut. 32: 35 and Proverbs 25: 21, 22. Verse 20 is often misinterpreted to mean that by being kind to an enemy we make his final punishment more severe; more probably it means that a burning remorse will come upon the enemy, moving him to repentance.

The final verse (21) must not be taken away from the chapter as a whole, otherwise it becomes a mere literary flourish. Seen as an integral part of Paul's thought it represents his supreme confidence that this is God's world in which evil has been conquered in principle by the death and resurrection of Christ, and in which we, in His power, can overcome evil in our lives.

(*c*) THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE (13: 1–7)

Paul now turns his attention to the place of the Christian in the State; his position in relation to the ruling power and its authority over him and his reaction in normal circumstances. It was obvious from the first that the confession " Jesus is Lord " would be seen in contrast to " Caesar is Lord " and that tension would follow.

We have assumed that the " higher powers " in verse 1 are earthly governments and not angelic or heavenly powers. This latter interpretation has been suggested by some scholars, notably Professor Oscar Cullmann, but has not gained general support.

The apostle calls for law-abiding behaviour from all Christians. The power invested in the State is given by God (see John 19: 11), therefore the rebellious and seditious atttitude is against God's will (2). If a man behaves properly, he has nothing to fear. It is the wrongdoer who has cause for alarm, since the sword carried before a governor on

special occasions was not just decoration, it symbolized the reality of his power of life and death.

In vv. 4 and 5 the word " wrath " occurs again (see 1: 18). It may well be that its use here supports Dr. Dodd's view that wrath means the inevitable self-assertion of justice in God's moral world. Sin will " catch up on " those who do it, and the State will be the expression of God's moral order at work.

So Christians are to be obedient, peaceful and law abiding citizens, whether it be on the question of respect or of paying taxes (cf. in this connexion 1 Peter 2: 17).

Obviously there is more in the question of Church-State or Christian-State relationships than this. We must not assume that Paul is saying that the State can do no wrong or that Christians must always abide by the government's decisions. There may well come a point where protest has to be made or where obedience has to be withheld, but it is not the *duty* of the Church to attempt to overthrow the secular order. A clearer idea of Paul's teaching at this point could have kept certain Reformation sects from disastrous action in the 16th century.

There is a little book by Professor Jean Héring of Strasbourg, written in English under the title *Good and Bad Government.* It was published in America in 1954 and although difficult to obtain is probably the best simple study of this difficult question available to-day.

(*d*) THE LAW OF LOVE (13: 8–10)

These three verses sum up a great deal of the central New Testament teaching on ethics. They link with verse 7 —the word translated " dues " there is the same as is rendered " owe " in v. 8. It seems as though the mention of dues in v. 7 brings to mind the permanent " debt " of Christian charity—a debt from which we can never be free. Perhaps Moffatt's translation is to be preferred in v. 8—" Be in debt to no man—apart from the debt of love to one another."

The whole of Christian ethics is summed up in the key phrase " Love thy neighbour as thyself " (cf. Lev. 19: 18

and Mk. 12: 31)—a summary simple enough in appearance but far harder in practice, since we are not always sure how we love ourselves.

We have here the second of the two great commands (Mk. 12: 29f). The first is concerned with faith, the second with works; the first is implied in many places in chapters 1–8 (cf. 3: 22, 3: 31, 5: 1, etc.) and the second is the "*leit-motif*," of chapters 12–15. One thing which is often overlooked is that the second can only come as a result of the first; love for one's neighbour can be a weak or even dangerous doctrine unless it springs from our love for God—good works are the expression of right beliefs.

(*e*) ESCHATOLOGY AND ETHICS (13: 11–24)

The title of this section represents a recent discovery in New Testament scholarship. It is that belief about the end of all things ("eschatology" means the doctrine or science of the last things) not only influences, but to a large extent *determines* Christian conduct.

There is good evidence that St. Paul's thought may have undergone some development on this topic—the end of this present age. A comparison of 2 Thess. 2 or 1 Thess. 4: 13f with 1 Cor. 15: 35f or 2 Cor. 5: 1f will illustrate this. But whatever development of ideas took place, the apostle's views about the last things—resurrection, judgment, the consummation of the age, etc. determine a great deal of his theology. The fact that God has not yet seen fit to wind up and finalize his work should not blind us to the fact that one day it will be ended and that time is nearer now than when Paul wrote.

So Christians live in anticipation of a final great revelation of God's purpose. Let Professor Hunter's fine illustration be used: "Christians resemble people living in some Alpine valley; high overhead, the mountains wear the gold of morning; and though darkness still lingers below, the first shafts of morning have illumined their faces (cf. Lk. 1. 78 "The dayspring from on high hath visited us"). It is high time not only to be astir but to be putting on garments suitable to the new day."

Archbishop Carrington of Quebec has written about the pattern of ethical instruction in the New Testament. This so-called " catechetical pattern " has four aspects:

Laying aside (or putting on)
Being Subject
Watch and Pray
Stand Fast

These elements can be found in many New Testament passages, notably 1 Peter and Ephesians. They are all mentioned or implied in Romans 13; laying aside the works of darkness, putting on the armour of light (12), being subject to the higher powers (1), watching (11) and then standing fast (13, 14).

It was the chance sight of the closing verses of this chapter which met the deep spiritual need of Augustine of Carthage in the 4th century and helped in his conversion.

(*f*) TOLERATION AND LOVE (14: 1–23)

This chapter could be summed up by two verses, the first and the last; " As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions." (R.S.V.) " When we act apart from our faith, we sin " (Phillips).

The love which Paul has presented as the key to all Christian ethics is now described in practice. The first twelve verses are about toleration. Among the early Christians were some, perhaps converted from pagan beliefs, who had scruples about buying the meat from animals slaughtered as pagan sacrifices. Others, perhaps coming from strict Jewish backgrounds, felt that some days and festivals should be the occasion of celebrations.

Some ate meat, some were vegetarian; some regarded all days alike, others made a lot of certain days. What subjects for sarcastic comment and ridicule! What topics for a split in the fellowship!

Paul urges a Christian toleration of the opinion of others. We are not in a position to judge other people, as all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ in due course.

This toleration should express itself readily in the case of " young " Christians; who often tend to be more extreme in their views and prohibitions, but that must be accepted and their ideas may gradually develop in the church fellowship. As Professor Hunter sums up " While indirectly pointing out the errors of the weak, he (Paul) lays the obligations squarely on the strong."

It might appear that the basis of agreement in the fellowship is either a shallow, easy-going toleration or a common dread of God's final judgment. This is not so, as verses 13f show. The unifying force is love, for God and the brethren.

Because of love for the brethren no one will wish to cause his brother to stumble (see our Lord's stern words on the subject of stumbling blocks or offences in Mt. 18: 7f). Nothing, of itself, is unclean; but to a scrupulous person it may *seem* unclean. The other Christians, who do not share that view, must respect their brother's conscience. For instance, if a Christian did not eat meat the fact that another Christian enjoyed meat could easily be a shock and an obstacle to his faith (13–15).

In any case the whole question of eating meat is not of the essence of the faith. The Kingdom of God does not specify about eating and drinking; it deals with different values altogether—rightousness, peace, joy and the gift of the Spirit.

So the test of Christian action is always two-fold. Is it an expression of our faith in God? Will it cause difficulty for another Christian?

Obviously the modern illustrations of this principle are legion; in fact most Christian conduct should be regulated by what Paul has to say in this chapter. The modern situation is complex, but two regulative ideas from this passage ought to be given more prominence. First, that nothing is, of itself, unclean; second, that to put a stumbling block in a brother's way is the most un-Christlike of all acts. These two rules, significantly enough, are not originally Pauline. They derive from our Lord himself (cf. Mark 7: 14f and Mt. 18: 7f.).

(*g*) UNITY IN LOVE (15: 1–13)

The first six verses of chapter 15 lift this whole question of tolerance onto the highest plane. No one is to please himself, but to seek his neighbour's good, just as Christ did not please himself, but sought our good, even at so great a cost (the quotation in v. 3 is from Psalm 69: 9). It is appropriate to appeal to scripture (v. 4) wherein we find patience and comfort and finally, hope.

There is a marked similarity between the ideas in these verses and Philippians, especially chapter 2.

Verse 7 goes back to the theme of v. 1. " Welcome " or " receive one another " not in a shallow tolerance or mutual friendship, but because Christ receives us. Delicately Paul alludes to a truth he has tactfully kept in the background in most of the epistle. Jesus was a Jew—a servant of the circumcision (8). The gospel came to the Jews first for two reasons; so that God's promises could all be fulfilled and that, seeing this merciful action, the Gentiles might be moved to belief.

This gathering-in of Jews and Gentiles, already deduced from the view of history in chapters 9–11 is asserted again here (v. 9–12) in four Old Testament quotations from Psalm 18: 49, Deut. 32: 43, Psalm 117: 1 and Isaiah 11: 10.

Verse 13 sounds again a note which has been heard more frequently in post-war theology than for many centuries—the note of hope. It might almost be said that faith, hope and love are given equal prominence in Romans, see especially chapters 5 and 8.

The verse turns into a benediction and the great argument of Romans is over. The world has been seen through the eyes of a realist who was not afraid of the facts. The sin of man has been described, as has the mighty grace of God which has covered it. The resultant life has been discussed in certain respects, always being lifted to the height of the example of Christ. Now it remains only to add a sort of personal postscript and send a few greetings. Those we shall study in the next and final part.

QUESTIONS ON PART SEVEN

1. Discuss the relationship between eschatology and ethics in the light of Romans.
2. What does Paul mean by " clean " and " unclean " and " strong " and " weak " in Romans 14?
3. Write a critical note on " The Christian and the State " beginning with a résumé of Romans 13: 1–7.
4. In the light of Romans 14 what should the Christian attitude be to Sunday Observance, Total Abstinence, and certain forms of amusement?
5. Write a note on " Hope " in Romans.
6. Comment briefly on:—
   (*a*) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
   (*b*) The powers that be are ordained of God.
   (*c*) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.
   (*d*) Let everyone please his neighbour for his good to edification.

PART EIGHT

CONCLUSION—A PERSONAL TOUCH (15: 14 - 16: 27)

As we have seen, the great theme of the epistle is concluded. What remains consists primarily of a brief statement of Paul's future plans and some greetings to the Roman Christians. We may study this part in seven sections as follows:—

(*a*) Paul and his Readers (15: 14–21).
(*b*) Future Plans (22–33).
(*c*) Recommendation of Phoebe (16: 1–2).
(*d*) Personal messages (3–16).
(*e*) Warnings against Heretics (17–20).
(*f*) Greetings from Paul's Companions (21–24).
(*g*) Final Doxology (25–27).

(*a*) PAUL AND HIS READERS (15: 14–21)

Just as in 1: 12 Paul is careful to do no violence to the susceptibility of the Roman Christians, so here, in 15: 14, he is modest and charming in his reference to their goodness, love and ability to help one another along in the faith. But his divine commission (see 1: 5) permits him to be frank in reminding them of some aspects of gospel truth. He regards himself as a priest (v. 16 where the A.V. has " minister "), drawing near to the altar of God's love to offer as a sacrifice the Gentiles who will believe and are sanctified by the Spirit.

This is something to be proud of (17) not for his own part, but for what God has been pleased to do through him. The apostle mentions the extent of his missionary work " from Jerusalem to Jugoslavia." Whether this means Paul actually preached in Illyricum, or whether he only went that far, we cannot be certain. There is no evidence

in Acts that he entered Illyricum, but the chronology of his journeys would allow time for mission work there.

Always Paul has worked in unevangelized territory (20), not trying to take advantage of someone else's ministry. The quotation in v. 21 is from the fourth "Suffering Servant Song," the exact reference being Isaiah 52: 15.

(*b*) FUTURE PLANS (22–33)

The restless apostle to the Gentiles longs to do more work. The pagan West, including Spain and Britain had never heard the gospel and Paul obviously intended (24) to work in this area and visit Rome on the way. The word rendered "be brought on my way thitherward" (24) or perhaps "sped on my way" (R.S.V. and Moffatt) might include the idea of some financial responsibility for the journey, although this is not certain. In any case, Paul desires to have fellowship with the Roman Christians before going any further west.

There is, however, one other plan which takes precedence over all others at the time of writing—a projected visit to Jerusalem to take some money for the Christians there. They were in dire straits and Paul saw it as a privilege and duty for the other Christians to make a collection for them. This applied to all the churches established by the apostle (cf. Acts 11: 27–30 and 1 Cor. 16: 1) and could be regarded as a fitting gesture, since all shared in the spiritual things, i.e. the gospel, all should share in material things.

The story of this gift is an interesting one and can be mentioned in outline here. We read in Acts 2 and 4 about a voluntary communism practised in Jerusalem by the first Christians. The means they used (cf. story of Ananias and Sapphira) was not a very good one—money was brought in, pooled and shared out. Consequently the capital would not last long. Paul came to the rescue of this community by persuading the *Gentile* Christians to put aside a little each week for the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. Not only an act of Christian love, one might think, but also a positive way of helping favourable relations between Jews and Gentile Christians.

In Acts 20: 4 we read of the delegates appointed to take the money and apparently Paul had high hopes that his gesture of friendship and fellowship would help the Christians in Jerusalem, some of whom were suspicious of his activities among the Gentiles, to take a broader view.

In fact Paul's visit was a failure. Although gladly received by some (Acts 21: 17f.) James gave a very cool reception to the apostle to the Gentiles and virtually commanded him to perform certain Jewish ceremonies as a sign of his "orthodoxy." Paul agreed, but was later charged with taking ineligible persons into the Temple, and was nearly lynched. So began the long series of events which ended with Paul in Rome, as he had planned, but not as a fellow Christian and missionary, but as a prisoner, waiting for trial before Caesar.

Although none of this had happened when Paul wrote to Rome, knowledge of the result of his collection gives a certain tragic ring to his statements in chapter 15. It seems that Paul did suspect that all might not be easy with his planned visit to Jerusalem. This gives special point to his request (Romans 15: 31) for prayers for his deliverance from the unbelievers, the statement (Acts 20: 22) "I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there," and the pitiful "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21: 13).

(*c*) RECOMMENDATION OF PHOEBE (16: 1–2)

It seems highly likely that Phoebe carried the letter to the Romans from Paul to its destination. Perhaps she was going to Rome of her own accord and agreed to carry the message. In any case, Paul gives her an introduction to the Roman Christians, saying two important things about her: that she was a "servant" or "deacon" of the church at Cenchreae (the port of Corinth) and that she was the "succourer" or "patroness" of many, including the apostle himself.

What " deacon " means can only be guessed. Perhaps she held a recognized place in church life, or was a sick visitor or ministered to the poor. This is just one more bit of evidence for the major part played by women in the early church.

As " patroness " of many she may have offered hospitality to the apostle, or looked after him in a time of sickness. Certainly she must have had some special contact with Paul to be given such a reference and recommendation.

See introduction for notes on destination of chapter 16.

(*d*) PERSONAL MESSAGES (3–16)

It seems as though Paul is greeting all the people in Rome whom he knew, partly as a testimony to his own position and partly to prepare the way for his forthcoming visit. We note with some surprise that the Christian Church in Rome must have been quite a considerable one, including some influential people.

As we look at the list the first is another woman, Prisca (called rather familiarly Priscilla—" little Prisca "). In the six New Testament references to Aquila and Priscilla, four put the lady first. Many scholars have wondered whether she was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. Her story can be built up from the details given in Acts 18: 2, 18: 26, 1 Cor. 16: 19 and 2 Timothy 4: 19. She and her husband apparently had a " church in their house " wherever they went and on one occasion (probably at Ephesus) had risked their lives for Paul's sake.

Epaenetus had a special place as the first Asian Christian (5). Andronicus and Junias, who had been Christians longer than Paul, were probably Jews (that is the most likely interpretation of " kinsmen "). They had been in prison with the apostle, probably because of their evangelical activity. It may be that they were originally connected with the first church in Jerusalem.

The mother of Rufus had at some time " mothered " St. Paul (13). The rest of the churches join (16) in greeting the church in the capital city.

(*e*) WARNINGS AGAINST HERETICS (17–20)

It would have seemed that the letter was finished. A brief closing exhortation and the doxology would have made a typical finish. This time, however, Paul has an after-thought and he sets it down. It may be that, having recalled the number of friends he has in Rome, he is less anxious to be absolutely polite and respectful and feels more able to speak his mind on an important question. Certainly the " pastoral " tone creeps in here, and there is a blunt warning against heretics and false teachers. Even this is softened somewhat by a reference to the well-known fidelity of the Roman Christians. Who these heretics were we cannot say. Perhaps they were extremists who tried to enforce complete obedience to the Jewish law upon all Christians, perhaps they were semi-gnostic heretics like those against whom much of the teaching in Colossians is directed.

Whatever happens and however successful false teaching may temporarily be, God will, as the whole weight of Romans is intended to show, vindicate the right at the last (20).

(*f*) GREETINGS FROM PAUL'S COMPANIONS (21–24)

As is usual in Paul's epistles, there is some reference to the apostle's situation, his friends, and so on. Of those mentioned in these verses only Timothy can be identified with confidence. Lucius may be the Cyrenian mentioned in Acts 13: 1, Jason could be the same man who was Paul's host in Thessalonica (Acts 17: 5–9), and Sosipater might be Sopater of Berea who appears in Acts 20: 4. None of these identifications, however, can be proved, nor, for that matter, can they be disproved.

Tertius adds his private note and Paul gives the greetings of three more friends, including Erastus the city treasurer at Corinth, who might be the Erastus mentioned in Acts 19: 22.

(*g*) FINAL DOXOLOGY (25–27)

As we have already noticed (see Part One—" The Two Recensions ") the doxology is placed after 14: 23 in some

manuscripts. We must reject the temptation to run quickly over these last verses, as they contain some important points. First among them is Paul's confident use of the words "*my* gospel." This does not mean that it was Paul's own creation, but refers to the one gospel as understood and interpreted by St. Paul with his special experiences and insights. This gospel was in fact the "preaching" or "announcement" about Jesus Christ.

The reference to a secret, kept from the very beginning, but now made public for all men, assumes an important place in Paul's later writings. God had, as it were, kept His secret about Jesus Christ, but then revealed it to the world. Col. 1: 24–29, 2: 2–3 are examples of this idea, which is not by any means peculiar to Paul, cf. for example 1 Peter 1: 19, 20.

One point which has not previously been noticed by commentators is the close similarity between Romans 1: 1–5 and 16: 25–27. It is so marked that it cannot be accidental and we are surely justified in supposing that Paul is consciously gathering up his theme. Let us set down some of the parallels:—

Romans 1: 1–5	16: 25–27
The Gospel of God	my gospel
prophets in the holy scriptures	the scriptures of the prophets
for obedience to the faith among all nations.	made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

The final ascription is indeed fitting for the epistle. The word "glory" would recall for the Israelite the radiant presence of God, associated with the tabernacle, the ark and the holy mountain. Now it is still "glory" but is "through Jesus Christ."

So ends this great letter which, by God's mercy, has been preserved for us to-day. It is still relevant. In times of great spiritual need or crisis it is in Romans that so much help has been found. Perhaps a renewed study of it by ministers and faithful people will again have considerable influence in the world in which we live.

QUESTIONS ON PART EIGHT

1. Discuss the plans St. Paul had for the relief of the poor Christians in Jerusalem. How far did he carry them out?
2. What plans had the apostle for work in the West after his visit to Jerusalem?
3. What is known of Aquila and Prisca from the New Testament writings?
4. Comment briefly on:—
   (*a*) For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.
   (*b*) Phoebe . . . a servant of the church which is at Cenchreae.
   (*c*) Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
   (*d*) Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
   (*e*) Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest . . .