

Adam Clarke's Commentary

Paul's Letter to the Romans Chapter 9

Paul expresses his great sorrow for the unbelief and obstinacy of the Jews, 1-3. Whose high privileges he enumerates, 4, 5. Points out the manner in which God has chosen to communicate the knowledge of his name to both Jews and Gentiles; and how he deals, whether in judgment or mercy, with individuals; and produces the cases of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh, 6-17. God shows mercy and judgment as he thinks proper, and none have a right to find fault with his proceedings, 18-20. He has the same power over the human race as the potter has over the clay, 21-23. The prophets predicted the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, 24-29. The Gentiles have attained to the knowledge of Gods method of saving sinners; while the Jews have not attained this knowledge, 30, 31. The reason why the Jews have not attained the salvation provided for them in the Gospel, 32, 33.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 9 -

To this and the tenth chapter, Dr. Taylor has prefixed the following judicious summary:

The apostle has largely proved in the preceding chapters, that the grace of God extends to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and that the dispensation of Gods mercy was absolutely, and in itself, free to all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, in opposition to the merit of any works, or of conformity to any law whatever; and that the Gentiles have, by faith, a good title to the blessings of Gods covenant, to which blessings the Jews cannot have a title any other way. Hitherto the apostle has not considered the Jews as rejected, except in an indirect way, but that they had the possibility of continuing in the Church, from entering into which they should not attempt to prevent the Gentiles, but allow them to be sharers in the mercies of God; and hence his language is in sum this: Why may not believing Gentiles be admitted, pardoned, and saved, as well as you?

But in this chapter, and the two following, the apostle considers the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom and covenant of God under the notion of calling or invitation, and of election or choice: which shows that he views the two parties in a light different to that in which he had before placed them. The Gentiles he considers as invited into the kingdom of God, and as chosen to be his people; and the Jews he considers as left out and rejected; for as the main body of them had now rejected the Gospel of Christ, he saw that God was about to unchurch them, overturn their polity, destroy their temple, and disperse them over the face of the earth. Thus he knew they would be accursed, or anathematized from Christ, and reduced to a level with the heathen nations of the world. And the event has proved that his declarations were dictated by the Spirit of truth.

It is observable that, agreeably to his delicate manner of writing, and his nice and tender treatment of his countrymen, he never mentions their rejection—a subject extremely painful to his thoughts—otherwise than in a wish that he himself were accursed from Christ for them, or to prevent them from being accursed from Christ, (Romans 9:3,) till he comes to Rom. 11, where he has much to say in their favor, even considered, as at present, rejected. But it is very evident that his arguments in this chapter rest on the supposition that the main body of the Jewish nation would be cast out of the visible kingdom of God; and it is for this reason that in this and the two following chapters he considers the reception of any people into the kingdom and covenant of God under the relative notion of inviting and choosing, or of calling and election. The Jews were rejected and reprobated; the Gentiles were chosen and called, or elected. As this is most obviously the apostles meaning, it is strange that any should apply his doctrine to the particular and unconditional reprobation and election of individuals.

It is upon this rejection of the Jews that the calling and election of the Gentiles rest. If the Jews be not rejected, but are still the visible Church and kingdom of God, then the Gentiles, according to the most proper inference from the apostles doctrine, have no right to the blessings of the kingdom. Instead of being invited or called, they are intruders at the heavenly feast; and this the unbelieving Jews labored to prove, and thus unhinge the believing Gentiles by persuading them that they were not duly taken into the Church of God; that the Jews were, and ever must continue to be, the only Church and kingdom of God, and that they could not be cast off so long as God was faithful to his promise to Abraham; and that the Gentiles were most miserably deceived when they supposed they were brought into that kingdom by faith in Christ, whereas there was no way of entering it, or of being entitled to its privileges, but by submitting to the law of Moses. This being the fixed opinion of the Jews, and the ground on which they opposed the Gentiles and endeavored to sap the foundation of their hope of salvation from the Gospel of Christ, it was therefore a matter of the utmost importance to be able to prove that the Jews, by rejecting Christ and his Gospel, were themselves cast out of the Church, and this in a way perfectly consistent with the truth of the promise made to Abraham. He had slightly touched on this subject at the beginning of the third chapter; but it would have broken in too much on the thread of his discourse to have pursued the argument there, for which reason he appears to have reserved it to this place, where he (1) solemnly declares his tenderest affection for his countrymen, and his real grief of heart for their infidelity and consequent rejection, Romans 9:1-5; (2) Answers objections against this rejection, Romans 9:6-23; (3) Proves the calling of the Gentiles from their own Scriptures, Romans 9:24-30; (4) Gives the true state and reasons of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, Romans 9:30 to Romans 10:14; (5) Proves the necessity of the apostolic mission to the Gentiles in order to their salvation, Romans 10:14-21.

And all this was intended at once to vindicate the Divine dispensations; to convince the infidel Jew; to satisfy the believing Gentile that his calling or invitation into the Church of God was valid; to arm him against the cavils and objections of the unbelieving Jews, and to dispose the Christian Jew to receive and own the believing Gentile as a member of the family and kingdom of God, by Divine right, equal to any to which he himself could pretend. See Taylors notes, p. 321, etc.

Verse 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not* This is one of the most solemn oaths any man can possibly take. He appeals to Christ as the searcher of hearts that he tells the truth; asserts that his conscience was free from all guile in this matter, and that the Holy Ghost bore him testimony that what he said was true. Hence we find that the testimony of a mans own conscience, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, are two distinct things, and that the apostle had both at the same time.

As the apostle had still remaining a very awful part of his commission to execute, namely, to declare to the Jews not only that God had chosen the Gentiles, but had rejected them because they had rejected Christ and his Gospel, it was necessary that he should assure them that however he had been persecuted by them because he had embraced the Gospel, yet it was so far from being a gratification to him that they had now fallen under the displeasure of God, that it was a subject of continual distress to his mind, and that it produced in him great heaviness and continual sorrow.

Verse 3. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ* This and the two preceding verses are thus paraphrased by Dr. Taylor: I am so far from insisting on the doctrine (of the rejection of the Jews) out of any ill-will to my countrymen, that I solemnly declare, in the sincerity of my heart, without the least fiction or dissimulation- and herein I have the testimony of my own conscience, enlightened and directed by the Spirit of God- that I am so far from taking pleasure in the rejection of the Jewish nation, that, contrariwise, it gives me continual pain and uneasiness, insomuch that, as Moses formerly (when God proposed to cut them off, and in their stead to make him a great nation, Exodus 32:10) begged that he himself should rather die than that the children of Israel should be destroyed, Exodus 32:32, so I could even wish that the exclusion from the visible Church, which will happen to the Jewish nation, might fall to my own share, if hereby they might be kept in it and to this I am inclined by natural affection, for the Jews are my dear brethren and kindred.

Very few passages in the New Testament have puzzled critics and commentators more than this. Every person saw the perfect absurdity of understanding it in a literal sense, as no man in his right mind could wish himself eternally damned in order to save another, or to save even the whole world. And the supposition that such an effect could be produced by such a sacrifice, was equally absurd and monstrous. Therefore various translations have been made of the place, and different solutions offered. Mr. Wakefield says: I see no method of solving the difficulty in this verse, which has so exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators, but by the eucomai einai of Homer, I profess myself to be; and he translates the passage in a parenthesis, thus: (for I also was once an alien from Christ) on account of my brethren, etc. But how it does appear that Saul of Tarsus was ever an alien from Christ on account of his kinsmen, is to me perfectly indiscernible. Let us examine the Greek text. *hucomhn gar autov egw anaqema einai apo tou cristou upertwn adelfwn mou*, For I did wish myself to be an anathema FROM Christ (upo, BY Christ, as some ancient MSS. read) for my brethren. As hucomhn is the 1st per. sing. of the imperfect tense, some have been led to think that St. Paul is here mentioning what had passed through his own mind when filled with the love of God, he learned the rejection of the Jews; and that he only mentions it here as a thing which, in the effusions of his loving

zeal, had been felt by him inconsiderately, and without any Divine afflatus leading him to it; but that he does not intimate that now he felt any such unreasonable and preposterous wish. I am afraid this is but ill calculated to solve the difficulty.

The Greek word *anaqema*, *anathema*, properly signifies any thing devoted to God, so as to be destroyed: it answers to the Hebrew *cherem*, which the Septuagint translate by it, and means either a thing or person separated from its former state or condition, and devoted to destruction. In this sense it is used, Deuteronomy 7:25, 26; Joshua 6:17, 18; 7:12.

It is certain that the word, both among the Hebrews and Greeks, was used to express a person devoted to destruction for the public safety. In Midrash *hanneelam*, in *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 15, Rabbi Chaijah the elder said: There is no shepherd found like unto Moses, who was willing to lay down his life for the sheep; for Moses said, Exodus 32:32, If thou wilt not pardon their sin, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. Such *anathemas*, or persons devoted to destruction for the public good, were common among all ancient nations. See the case of M. Curtius and Decius among the Romans. When a plague took place, or any public calamity, it was customary to take one of the lowest or most execrable of the people, and devote him to the *Dii Manes* or infernal gods. See proofs in Schleusner, and see the observations at the end of the chapter. This one circumstance is sufficient to explain the word in this place. Paul desired to be devoted to destruction, as the Jews then were, in order to redeem his countrymen from this most terrible excision. He was willing to become a sacrifice for the public safety, and to give his life to redeem theirs. And, as Christ may be considered as devoting them to destruction, (see Matthew 24.) Paul is willing that in their place Christ should devote him: for I could wish myself, *anaqema eimai apo* (or, as some excellent MSS. have it, *upo*) *tou cristou*, to be devoted BY Christ, to that temporal destruction to which he has adjudged the disobedient Jews, if by doing so I might redeem them. This, and this alone, seems to be the meaning of the apostles wish.

Verse 4. Who are Israelites Descendants of Jacob, a man so highly favored of God, and from whom he received his name Israel-a prince of God, Genesis 32:28; from which name his descendants were called Israelites, and separated unto God for his glory and praise. Their very name of Israelites implied their very high dignity; they were a royal nation; princes of the most high God.

The adoption The Israelites were all taken into the family of God, and were called his sons and first-born, Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1; Jeremiah 31:9; Hosea 11:1; and this adoption took place when God made the covenant with them at Horeb.

The glory The manifestation of God among them; principally by the cloud and pillar, and the *Shekinah*, or Divine presence, appearing between the cherubim over the mercy-seat. These were peculiar to the Jews; no other nation was ever thus favored.

The covenants The covenants made with Abraham, both that which relates to the spiritual seed, and that which was peculiar to his natural descendants, Galatians 3:16, 17; which

covenants were afterwards renewed by Moses, Deuteronomy 29:1. Some suppose that the singular is here put for the plural, and that by covenants we are to understand the decalogue, which is termed *tyrb berith*, or covenant, Deuteronomy 4:13. But it is more likely that the apostle alludes to the great covenant made with Abraham, and to its various renewals and extensions at different times afterwards, as well as to its twofold design—the grant of the land of Canaan, and the rest that remains for the people of God. The giving of the law The revelation of God by God himself, containing a system of moral and political precepts. This was also peculiar to the Jews; for to no other nation had he ever given a revelation of his will.

The service latreia. The particular ordinances, rites, and ceremonies of their religious worship, and especially the sacrificial system, so expressive of the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God.

The promises The land of Canaan, and the blessings of the Messiah and his kingdom; which promises had been made and often repeated to the patriarchs and to the prophets.

Verse 5. *Whose are the fathers* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, etc., etc., without controversy, the greatest and most eminent men that ever flourished under heaven. From these, is an uninterrupted and unpolluted line, the Jewish people had descended; and it was no small glory to be able to reckon, in their genealogy, persons of such incomparable merit and excellency. *And of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came* These ancestors were the more renowned, as being the progenitors of the human nature of the MESSIAH. Christ, the Messiah, *kata sarka*, according to the flesh, sprang from them. But this Messiah was more than man, he is God over all; the very Being who gave them being, though he appeared to receive a being from them.

Here the apostle most distinctly points out the twofold nature of our Lord—his eternal Godhead and his humanity; and all the transpositions of particles, and alterations of points in the universe, will not explain away this doctrine. As this verse contains such an eminent proof of the deity of Christ, no wonder that the opposers of his divinity should strive with their utmost skill and cunning to destroy its force. And it must be truly painful to a mind that has nothing in view but truth, to see the mean and hypocritical methods used to elude the force of this text. Few have met it in that honest and manly way in which Dr. Taylor, who was a conscientious Arian, has considered the subject. Christ, says he, is God over all, as he is by the Father appointed Lord, King, and Governor of all. The Father hath committed all judgement to the Son, John 5:22; has given all things into his hands, Matthew 28:18; he is Lord of all, Acts 10:36. God has given him a name above every name, Philippians 2:9; above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things (himself excepted, 1 Corinthians 15:27) under his feet and given him to be head over all things, Ephesians 1:21, 22. This is our Lords supreme Godhead. And that he is *eulogtov*, blessed for ever, or the object of everlasting blessing, is evident from Revelation 5:12, 13: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power—and blessing and honor be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Thus it appears the words may be justly applied to

our blessed Lord. Notes, p. 329. Yes, and when we take other scriptures into the account, where his essential Godhead is particularly expressed, such as Colossians 1:16, 17: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created BY him, and FOR him: and he is BEFORE all things, and BY him do all things consist; we shall find that he is not God by investiture or office, but properly and essentially such; for it is impossible to convey in human language, to human apprehension, a more complete and finished display of what is essential to Godhead, indivisible from it, and incommunicable to any created nature, than what is contained in the above verses. And while these words are allowed to make a part of Divine revelation, the essential Godhead of Jesus Christ will continue to be a doctrine of that revelation.

I pass by the groundless and endless conjectures about reversing some of the particles and placing points in different positions, as they have been all invented to get rid of the doctrine of Christs divinity, which is so obviously acknowledged by the simple text; it is enough to state that there is no omission of these important words in any MS. or version yet discovered.

Verse 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.* A Jew might have objected, as in Romans 3:3: Is not God bound by his faithfulness to continue the Jews as his peculiar Church and people, notwithstanding the infidelity of the major part of them? If they are brought to a level with the Gentiles, will it not follow that God hath failed in the performance of his promise to Abraham? Genesis 17:7, 8: I will establish my covenant between me and thee for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. To which it may be answered: This awful dispensation of God towards the Jews is not inconsistent with the veracity of the Divine promise; for even the whole body of natural born Jews are not the whole of the Israelites comprehended in the promise. Abraham is the father of many nations; and his seed is not only that which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of Abraham, Romans 4:16, 17. The Gentiles were included in the Abrahamic covenant as well as the Jews; and therefore the Jews have no exclusive right to the blessings of Gods kingdom.

Verse 7. *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, etc.* Nor can they conclude, because they are the natural descendants of Abraham, that therefore they are all of them, without exception, the children in whom the promise is to be fulfilled.

But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. The promise is not confined to immediate natural descent, but may be accomplished in any part of Abrahams posterity. For Abraham had several sons besides Isaac, Genesis 25:1, 2, particularly Ishmael, who was circumcised before Isaac was born, and in whom Abraham was desirous that the promise should be fulfilled, Genesis 17:18, and in him God might have fulfilled the promise, had he so pleased; and yet he said to Abraham, Genesis 21:12: Not in Ishmael, but in Isaac, shall thy seed be called.

Verse 8. *That is, They which are the children of the flesh* Whence it appears that not the children who descend from Abrahams loins, nor those who were circumcised as he was,

nor even those whom he might expect and desire, are therefore the Church and people of God; but those who are made children by the good pleasure and promise of God, as Isaac was, are alone to be accounted for the seed with whom the covenant was established.

Verse 9. *For this is the word of promise, etc.* That is, this is evidently implied in the promise recorded Genesis 18:10: At this time I will come, saith God, and exert my Divine power, and Sarah, though fourscore and ten years old, shall have a son; which shows that it is the sovereign will and act of God alone, which singles out and constitutes the peculiar seed that was to inherit the promise made to Abraham.

It should be considered that the apostle, in this and the following quotations, does not give us the whole of the text which he intends should be taken into his argument, but only a hint or reference to the passages to which they belong; directing us to recollect or peruse the whole passage, and there view and judge of the argument.

That he is so to be understood appears from the conclusion he draws, Romans 9:16: So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. In his arguments, Romans 9:7, 8, etc., he says not one word of Abrahams willing Ishmael to be the seed in whom the promise might be fulfilled; nor of Isaacs willing Esau; nor of Moses willing and interceding that the Israelites might be spared; nor of Esaus running for venison; but by introducing these particulars into his conclusion, he gives us to understand that his quotations are to be taken in connection with the whole story, of which they are a part; and without this the apostles meaning cannot be apprehended.

The same may be said of his conclusion, Romans 9:18: Whom he will he hardeneth: hardeneth is not in his argument, but it is in the conclusion. Therefore hardening is understood in the argument, and he evidently refers to the case of Pharaoh. The generality of the Jews were well acquainted with the Scripture, and a hint was sufficient to revive the memory of a whole passage. Taylor, p. 330.

Verse 10. *And not only this* A Jew might object: Ishmael was rejected, not by the sovereign will of God, but because he was the son of the handmaid, or bond-woman, and therefore unworthy to be the peculiar seed; but observe, this was not the only limitation of the seed of Abraham with regard to inheriting the promise, for when Rebecca was with child by that one person of Abrahams issue to whom the promise was made, namely, our father Isaac, she went to inquire of the Lord, Genesis 25:22, 23: And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE; and the elder shall serve the younger. That is, the posterity of the younger shall be a nation much more prosperous and happy than the posterity of the elder.

Verse 11. *For the children being not yet born* As the word children is not in the text, the word nations would be more proper; for it is of nations that the apostle speaks, as the following verses show, as well as the history to which he refers. *Neither having done any good* To merit the distinction of being made the peculiar people of God; nor evil, to deserve to be left out of this covenant, and the distinguishing national blessings which it

conferred; that the purpose of God according to election might stand—that such distinctions might appear to depend on nothing but Gods free choice, not of works, or any desert in the people or nations thus chosen; but of the mere purpose of him who calleth any people he pleases, to make them the depositories of his especial blessings, and thus to distinguish them from all others.

Verse 12. *The elder shall serve the younger* These words, with those of Malachi, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, are cited by the apostle to prove, according to their typical signification, that the purpose of God, according to election, does and will stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; that is, that the purpose of God, which is the ground of that election which he makes among men, unto the honor of being Abrahams seed, might appear to remain unchangeable in him; and to be even the same which he had declared unto Abraham. That these words are used in a **national** and **not** in a **personal** sense, is evident from this: that, taken in the latter sense they are not true, *for Jacob never did exercise any power over Esau, nor was Esau ever subject to him. Jacob, on the contrary, was rather subject to Esau, and was sorely afraid of him*; and, first, by his messengers, and afterwards personally, acknowledged his brother to be his lord, and himself to be his servant; see Genesis 32:4; 33:8, 13. And hence it appears that neither Esau nor Jacob, nor even their posterities, are brought here by the apostle as instances of any personal reprobation from eternity: for, it is very certain that very many, if not the far greatest part, of Jacobs posterity were wicked, and rejected by God; and it is not less certain that some of Esaus posterity were partakers of the faith of their father Abraham.

From these premises the true sense of the words immediately following, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, Malachi 1:2, 3, fully appears; that is, that what he had already cited from Moses concerning the two nations, styled by the names of their respective heads, Jacob and Esau, was but the same in substance with what was spoken many years after by the Prophet Malachi. The unthankful Jews had, in Malachis time, either in words or in their heart, expostulated with God, and demanded of him wherein he had loved them? *I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?* Malachi 1:2-5. To this the Lord answers: *Was not Esau Jacobs brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

1. It incontestably appears from these passages that the prophet does not speak at all of the person of Jacob or Esau, but of their respective posterities. For it was not Esau in person that said, *We are impoverished*; neither were his mountains nor heritage laid waste. Now, if the prophet speaks neither of the person of the one nor of the person of the other, but of their posterity only, then it is evident that the apostle speaks of them in the same way.
2. If neither the prophet nor the apostle speaks of the persons of Jacob or Esau, but of their posterity, then it is evident that neither the love of God to Jacob, nor the

hatred of God to Esau, were such, according to which the eternal states of men, either in happiness or misery, are to be determined; nor is there here any Scriptural or rational ground for the decree of unconditional personal election and reprobation, which, comparatively, modern times have endeavored to build on these scriptures.

1. For, It is here proved that Esau is not mentioned under any personal consideration, but only as the head of his posterity.
2. The testimony of Scripture amply proves that all Esaus posterity were not, even in this sense, reprobated; nor all Jacobs posterity elected.
3. Neither does that service, or subjugation to Jacob, which the Divine oracle imposed on Esau, import any such reprobation as some contend for; as the servant may be elected, while the master himself is in a state of reprobation.
4. Were it even granted that servitude did import such a reprobation, yet it is certain that Esau, in person, never did serve Jacob.
5. Nor does the hatred of God against Esau import any such reprobation of the person of Esau, because it is demonstrable that it related, not to Esau personally, but to his posterity.
6. The scope of the apostles reasoning is to show that God is the sovereign of his own ways, has a right to dispense his blessings as he chooses, and to give salvation to mankind, not in the ways of their devising, but in that way that is most suitable to his infinite wisdom and goodness.
 1. Therefore, He chose the Jewish people from all others, and revealed himself to them. Thus they were the elect, and all the nations of mankind reprobate.
 2. When the fullness of the time came he revealed himself also to the Gentiles, who gladly received the Gospel: and the Jews rejecting it, were cast off. Thus the elect became reprobate, and the reprobate, elect.
 3. He published to all mankind that the pardon of sin could and should be obtained ONLY by faith in his Son Jesus, and not by any obedience to any law. And the Jews, the descendants of Jacob, who rejected this way of salvation, became precisely like the Edomites, the descendants of Esau; they builded, but God pulled down; their mountains and heritage are NOW laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness; and they properly may now be called the border of wickedness, a people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever: they have rejected the Lord that bought them, and so have brought upon themselves swift destruction.
7. That no personal, absolute, eternal reprobation of Esau can have been intended, we learn from this; that he was most amply reconciled to his brother, who had so deeply wronged and offended him, by depriving him of his birthright and his blessing; and his having forgiven his brother his trespasses, was no mean proof that God had forgiven him. See our Lords words, Matthew 6:14. Therefore there can be assigned no competent ground of his damnation, much less of his personal reprobation from all eternity.

8. And were such a personal reprobation intended, is it not shocking to suppose that the God of endless mercy, in whose sight his pious parents had found favor, should inform them, even before their child was born, that he had absolutely consigned him, by an irrevocable decree to eternal damnation? A message of such horrid import coming immediately from the mouth of God, to a tender, weak, and delicate woman, whose hour of travail with two children was just at hand, could not have failed to produce abortion, and destroy her life. But the parents perfectly understood their God, and saw no decree of reprobation in his message; two manner of nations are in thy womb-and the elder shall serve the younger.
9. There is no reason, worthy the most wise and gracious God, why he should make known to the world such a thing concerning Esau, who was yet unborn, that he had reprobated him from all eternity. Such a revelation could be of no spiritual advantage or edification to mankind, but rather of a malignant influence, as directly occasioning men to judge hardly of their Maker, and to conceive of him as no faithful Creator; as having no care, no love, no bowels of compassion towards the workmanship of his own hands. See Goodwins Exposition: and see my notes on Gen. 27.

Verse 14. *What shall we say then?* To what conclusion shall we come on the facts before us? Shall we suggest that Gods bestowing peculiar privileges in this unequal manner, on those who otherwise are in equal circumstances, is inconsistent with *justice* and *equity*? *By no means.* Whatever God does is right, and he may dispense his blessings to whom and or what terms he pleases. (editor's note: See Finney's article on "[Is God's Sovereign Will the foundation of Moral Obligation?](#)" for an examination of what sense we may declare that "whatever God does is right".)

Verse 15. *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy, etc.* The words of God to Moses, Exodus 33:19, show that God has a right to dispense his blessings as he pleases; for, after he had declared that he would spare the Jews of old, and continue them in the relation of his peculiar people, when they had deserved to have been cut off for their idolatry, he said: I will make all my goodness pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. As if he had said: I will make such a display of my perfections as shall convince you that my nature is kind and beneficent; but know, that I am a debtor to none of my creatures. My benefits and blessings are merely from my own good will: nor can any people, much less a rebellious people, challenge them as their due in justice or equity. And therefore I now spare the Jews; not because either you, who intercede for them or they themselves have any claim upon my favor, but of my own free and sovereign grace I choose to show them mercy and compassion. I will give my salvation in my own way and on my own terms. He that believeth on my Son Jesus shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. This is Gods ultimate design; this purpose he will never change; and this he has fully declared in the everlasting Gospel. This is the grand DECREE of reprobation and election.

Verse 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth, etc.* I conclude, therefore, from these several instances, that the making or continuing any body of men the peculiar people of

God, is righteously determined; not by the judgment, hopes, or wishes of men, but by the will and wisdom of God alone. For Abraham judged that the blessing ought, and he willed, desired, that it might be given to Ishmael; and Isaac also willed, designed, it for his first-born, Esau: and Esau, wishing and hoping that it might be his, readily went, ran a hunting for venison, that he might have the blessing regularly conveyed to him: but they were all disappointed - Abraham and Isaac, who willed, and Esau who ran: for God had originally intended that the blessing of being a great nation and distinguished people should, of his mere good pleasure, be given to Isaac and Jacob, and be confirmed in their posterity; and to them it was given. And when by their apostasy they had forfeited this privilege, it was not Moses willing, nor any prior obligation God was under, but his own sovereign mercy, which continued it to them.

Verse 17. *For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh* Instead of showing the Israelites mercy he might justly have suffered them to have gone on in sin, till he should have signalized his wisdom and justice in their destruction; as appears from what God in his word declares concerning his dealings with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Exodus 9:15, 16: *For now, saith the Lord, I had stretched forth my hand, (in the plague of boils and blains,) and I had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence; and thou hadst (by this plague) been cut off from the earth; (as thy cattle were by the murrain;) but in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up-I have restored thee to health by removing the boils and blains, and by respiting thy deserved destruction to a longer day, that I may, in thy instance, give such a demonstration of my power in thy final overthrow, that all mankind may learn that I am God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, the avenger of wickedness.* See this translation of the original vindicated in my notes on Exodus 9:15, 16; and, about the hardening of Pharaoh, see the notes on those places where the words occur in the same book.

Verse 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will* This is the apostles conclusion from the facts already laid down: that God, according to his own will and wisdom, in perfect righteousness, bestows mercy; that is to say, his blessings upon one part of mankind, (the Jews of old, and the Gentiles of the present time,) while he suffers another part (the Egyptians of old, and the Jews of the present day) to go on in the abuse of his goodness and forbearance, hardening themselves in sin, till he brings upon them a most just and exemplary punishment, unless this be prevented by their deep repentance and general return to God through Jesus the promised, the real Messiah.

Verse 19. *Why doth he yet find fault?* The apostle here introduces the Jew making an objection similar to that in Romans 3:7: *If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, that is, if Gods faithfulness is glorified by my wickedness, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? Why am I condemned for that which brings so much glory to him?* The question here is: If Gods glory be so highly promoted and manifested by our obstinacy, and he suffers us to proceed in our hardness and infidelity, why does he find fault with us, or punish us for that which is according to his good pleasure?

Verse 20. *Nay but, O man, who art thou* As if he had said: *Weak, ignorant man, darest thou retort on the infinitely good and righteous GOD? Reflect on thyself; and tell me,*

after thou hast abused the grace of God, and transgressed his laws, wilt thou cavil at his dispensations? God hath made, created, formed the Jewish nation; and shall the thing formed, when it hath corrupted itself, pretend to correct the wise and gracious Author of its being, and say, Why hast thou made me thus? Why hast thou constituted me in this manner? Thou hast done me wrong in giving me my being under such and such conditions.

Old John Goodwins note on this passage is at least curious: I scarce (says he) know any passage of the Scripture more frequently abused than this. When men, in the great questions of predestination and reprobation, bring forth any text of Scripture which they conceive makes for their notion, though the sense which they put upon it be ever so uncouth and dissonant from the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, yet, if any man contradict, they frequently fall upon him with-Nay but, O man; who art thou? As if St. Paul had left them his heirs and successors in the infallibility of his spirit! But when men shall call a solid answer to their groundless conceits about the meaning of the Scriptures, a replying against God, it savours more of the spirit who was seen falling like lightning from heaven, than of His, who saw him in this his fall.

Verse 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay* The apostle continues his answer to the Jew. Hath not God shown, by the parable of the potter, Jeremiah 18:1, etc., that he may justly dispose of nations, and of the Jews in particular, according as he in his infinite wisdom may judge most right and fitting; even as the potter has a right, out of the same lump of clay, to make one vessel to a more honorable and another to a less honorable use, as his own judgment and skill may direct; for no potter will take pains to make a vessel merely that he may show that he has power to dash it to pieces? *For the word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potters house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potters house, and, behold, he wrought a work upon the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. It was not fit for the more honorable place in the mansion, and therefore he made it for a less honorable place, but as necessary for the masters use there, as it could have been in a more honorable situation. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay is in the potters hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will **repent** of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation-to build and to plant it; is it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will **repent** of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* The reference to this parable shows most positively that the apostle is speaking of men, not individually, but nationally; and it is strange that men should have given his words any other application with this scripture before their eyes.

Verse 22. *What if God, willing to show his wrath* The apostle refers here to the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and to which he applies Jeremiahs parable of the potter, and, from them, to the then state of the Jews. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were vessels of

wrath-persons deeply guilty before God; and by their obstinate refusal of his grace, and abuse of his goodness, they had fitted themselves for that destruction which the wrath, the vindictive justice of God, inflicted, after he had endured their obstinate rebellion with much long-suffering; which is a most absolute proof that the hardening of their hearts, and their ultimate punishment, were the consequences of their obstinate refusal of his grace and abuse of his goodness; as the history in Exodus sufficiently shows. As the Jews of the apostles time had sinned after the similitude of the Egyptians, hardening their hearts and abusing his goodness, after every display of his long-suffering kindness, being now fitted for destruction, they were ripe for punishment; and that power, which God was making known for their salvation, having been so long and so much abused and provoked, was now about to show itself in their destruction as a nation. But even in this case there is not a word of their final damnation; much less that either they or any others were, by a sovereign decree, reprobated from all eternity; and that their very sins, the proximate cause of their punishment, were the necessary effect of that decree which had from all eternity doomed them to endless torments. As such a doctrine could never come from God, so it never can be found in the words of his apostle.

Verse 23. *And that he might make known* God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath:

1. To show his wrath, and to make his power known. And also,
2. That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.

Which he had afore prepared unto glory The Jews were fitted for destruction long before; but the fittest time to destroy them was after he had prepared the believing Gentiles unto glory. For the rod of the Messiahs strength was to be sent out of Zion, Psalm 110:2. The Jewish nation was to supply the first preachers of the Gospel, and from Jerusalem their sound was to go forth into all the earth. Therefore the Jewish state, notwithstanding its corruptions, was to be preserved till the Messiah came, and even till the Gospel preached by the apostles had taken deep root in the Gentile world. Another thing which rendered the time when the Jewish polity was overthrown the most proper, was this, because then the immediate occasion of it was the extensiveness of the Divine grace. They would not have the Gentiles admitted into the Church of God; but contradicted, and blasphemed, and rejected the Lord that bought them: thus, then, the extensiveness of the Divine grace occasioned their infidelity, Romans 9:33; 10:3; 11:11, 12, 15, 28, 30. Thus the Jews were diminished by that abundance of grace which has enriched the Gentiles. And so the grace of God was illustrated; or, so God made known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy-the apostles and primitive believers among the Jews, and the Gentile world, which received the Gospel by the preaching of the apostles and their successors.

Verse 24. *Even us, whom he hath called* All the Jews and Gentiles who have been invited by the preaching of the Gospel to receive justification by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have come to the Gospel feast on this invitation.

Verse 25. *As he saith also in Osee* It is a cause of not a little confusion, that a uniformity in the orthography of the proper names of the Old and New Testaments has not been

preserved. What stranger to our sacred books would suppose that the Osee above meant the Prophet Hosea, from whom, Hosea 2:23, this quotation is taken: *I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people.* The apostle shows that this calling of the Gentiles was no fortuitous thing, but a firm purpose in the Divine mind, which he had largely revealed to the prophets; and by opposing the calling of the Gentiles, the Jews in effect renounced their prophets, and fought against God.

Verse 26. *And it shall come to pass, etc.* These quotations are taken out of Hosea, Hosea 1:10, where (immediately after God had rejected the ten tribes, or kingdom of Israel, Hosea 1:9, then saith God, Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God,) he adds, yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place in which it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. As if he had said: The decrease of numbers in the Church, by Gods utterly taking away the ten tribes, (Hosea 1:6,) shall be well supplied by what shall afterwards come to pass, by calling the Gentiles into it. They, the rejected Jews, which had been the people of God, should become a Lo-ammi-not my people. On the contrary, they, the Gentiles, who had been a Lo-ammi-not my people, should become the children of the living God. Again, Hosea 2:23: I will sow her (the Jewish Church) unto me in the earth, (alluding probably to the dispersion of the Jews over all the Roman empire; which proved a fruitful cause of preparing the Gentiles for the reception of the Gospel,) and, or moreover, I will have mercy upon her, the body of the believing Gentiles, that had not obtained mercy. See Taylor.

Verse 27. *Esaias also crieth* The apostle pursues his argument, which had for its object the proof that God, for their infidelity, had rejected the great body of the Jews, and that but a few of them would embrace the Gospel, and be saved from that besom of destruction which was now coming to sweep them and their state away. Dr. Taylor paraphrases this and the following verses thus: And that but a small remnant of the Jews shall now be taken into the Church, is agreeable to former dispensations; for the Prophet Isaiah expressly declares concerning the Israelites, Isaiah 10:22, 23: Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, (for the promise to Abraham has been amply fulfilled,) only a remnant shall be saved; the consumption decreed shall overflow in righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land.

Verse 28. *For he will finish the work, and cut it short, etc.* These appear to be forensic terms, and refer to the conclusion of a judicial proceeding; the Lord has tried and found them guilty, and will immediately execute upon them the punishment due to their transgressions.

Verse 29. *And as Esaias said before* What God designs to do with the Jews at present, because of their obstinacy and rebellion, is similar to what he has done before, to which the same prophet refers, Isaiah 1:9: *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah:*

i.e. had not God, who commands and overrules all the powers in heaven and earth, in mercy preserved a very small remnant, to keep up the name and being of the nation, it had been quite cut off and extinct, as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Thus we learn that it is no new thing with God to abandon the greatest part of the Jewish nation, when corrupt, and to confine his favor and blessing to a righteous, believing few.

Instead of remnant, said, both the Septuagint and the apostle have sperma, a seed, intimating that there were left just enough of the righteous to be a seed for a future harvest of true believers. So the godly were not destroyed from the land; some remained, and the harvest was in the days of the apostles.

Verse 30. *What shall we say then?* What is the final conclusion to be drawn from all these prophecies, facts, and reasonings? This: That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, etc. This, with the succeeding verses, together with what belongs to the same subject in the beginning of the following chapter, I have explained at large in the notes on Romans 1:17, to which I must refer the reader; and shall content myself in this place with Dr. Taylors general paraphrase. We may suppose the apostle to express himself to the following effect. Thus I have vindicated the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, with regard to the Divine veracity and justice. Now let us turn our thoughts to the true reason and state of the affair considered in itself. And, in the first place, what just notion ought we to have of the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews? I answer: The true notion of the calling or inviting of the Gentiles is this: whereas they had no apprehension of being reinstated in the privileges of Gods peculiar kingdom, and consequently used no endeavors to obtain that blessing, yet, notwithstanding, they have attained to justification, to the remission of sins, and the privileges of Gods people: not on account of their prior worthiness and obedience, but purely by the grace and mercy of God, received by faith on their part. And so, by embracing the scheme of life published by the Gospel, they are adopted into the family and Church of God. Thus the Gentiles are called or invited.

Verse 31. *But Israel, which followed after* But the Jews, who have hitherto been the people of God, though they have been industrious in observing a rule by which they supposed they could secure the blessings of Gods peculiar kingdom, yet have not come up to the true and only rule by which those blessings can be secured.

Verse 32. *Wherefore?* And where lies their mistake? Being ignorant of Gods righteousness-of his method of saving sinners by faith in Christ, they went about to establish their own righteousness-their own method of obtaining everlasting salvation. They attend not to the Abrahamic covenant, which stands on the extensive principles of grace and faith; but they turn all their regards to the law of Moses. They imagine that their obedience to that law gives them a right to the blessings of the Messiahs kingdom. But, finding that the Gospel sets our special interest in God and the privileges of his Church on a different footing, they are offended, and refuse to come into it.

Verse 33. *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion* Christ, the Messiah, is become a stone of stumbling to them: and thus what is written in the prophecy of Isaiah is verified in their

case, Isaiah 8:14; 28:16: Behold, I lay in Sion, i.e. I shall bring in my Messiah; but he shall be a widely different person from him whom the Jews expect; for, whereas they expect the Messiah to be a mighty secular prince, and to set up a secular kingdom, he shall appear a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; and redeem mankind, not by his sword or secular power, but by his humiliation, passion, and death. Therefore they will be offended at him and reject him, and think it would be reproachful to trust in such a person for salvation.

And whosoever believeth on him But so far shall any be from confusion or disappointment who believes in Christ; that on the contrary, every genuine believer shall find salvation-the remission of sins here, and eternal glory hereafter. See the notes on Romans 1:16, 17, and Dr. Taylors paraphrase and notes.

1. ON the subject of vicarious punishment, or rather the case of one becoming an anathema or sacrifice for the public good, in illustration of Romans 9:3, I shall make no apology for the following extracts, taken from an author whose learning is vast, and whose piety is unblemished.

When mankind lost sight of a beneficent Creator, the God of purity, and consecrated altars to the sun, the moon, the stars; to demons; and to hero gods, under the names of Moloch, Ashtaroth and Baalim; these objects of their worship led them to the most horrid acts of cruelty, and to every species of obscenity; even their sons and their daughters they burnt in the fire to their gods, more especially in seasons of distress. Such was the conduct of the king of Moab; for, when he was besieged in his capital, and expected he should fall into the hands of his enemies, he took his eldest son, who should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall.

With these facts thus related from the Scriptures, all accounts, ancient and modern, exactly correspond. Homer, who it must be recollected wrote more than nine hundred years before the Christian era, although he describes chiefly the common sacrifices of quadrupeds, yet gives one account of human victims. But in succeeding generations, when it was conceived that one great and most malignant spirit was the proper object of their fear, or that subordinate provincial gods, equally malignant, nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda, disposed of all things in our world, men bound their own species to the altar, and in circumstances of national distress presented such as they valued most, either their children or themselves. Herodotus informs us that, when the army of Xerxes came to the Strymon, the magi offered a sacrifice of white horses to that river. On his arrival at the Scamander, the king ascended the citadel of Priam; and having surveyed it, he ordered a thousand oxen to be sacrificed to the Trojan Minerva. But on other occasions he chose human victims; for we are informed that, when, having passed the Strymon, he reached the nine ways, he buried alive nine young men and as many virgins, natives of the country. In this he followed the example of his wife, for she commanded fourteen Persian children, of illustrious birth, to be offered in that manner to the deity who reigns beneath the earth. Thus, in the infancy of Rome we see Curtius, for the salvation of his country, devoting himself to the infernal gods, when, as it appears, an earthquake occasioned a deep and extensive chasm in the forum, and the augurs had

declared that the portentous opening would never close until what contributed most to the strength and power of the Romans should be cast into it; but that by such a sacrifice they would obtain immortality for their republic. When all men were at a loss how to understand this oracle, M. Curtius, armed as for battle, presented himself in the forum, and explained it thus: What is more valuable to Rome than her courage and her arms? So saying, he urged forward his impetuous steed, and buried himself in the abyss. His grateful countrymen admired his fortitude, and attributed the increasing splendor of their state to the sacrifice he made. Animated by this example, Decius, in the war between Rome and Latium, having solemnly offered himself as an expiatory sacrifice, rushed single into the thickest ranks of the astonished Latins, that by his death he might appease the anger of the gods, transfer their indignation to the enemy, and secure the victory to Rome. *Conspectus ab utroque acie aliquanto augustior humano visu, sicut Caelo missus, piaculum omnis deorum irae, qui pestem ab suis aversam in hostes ferret.*

Here we see distinctly marked the notion of vicarious suffering, and the opinion that the punishment of guilt may be transferred from the guilty to the innocent. The gods call for sacrifice-the victim bleeds-atonement is made-and the wrath of the infernal powers falls in its full force upon the enemy. Thus, while Themistocles at Salamine was offering sacrifice, three captives, the sons of Sandance, and nephews to Xerxes, all distinguished for their beauty, elegantly dressed and decked, as became their birth, with ornaments of gold, being brought on board his galley, the augur, Euphrantides, observing at the very instant a bright flame ascending from the altar, whilst one was sneezing on the right, which he regarded as a propitious omen, he seized the hand of Themistocles, and commanded that they should all be sacrificed to Bacchus, (wmdst dionusw-cruel and relentless Bacchus! Homer has the same expression,) predicting, on this occasion, safety and conquests to the Greeks. Immediately the multitude with united voices called on the god, and led the captive princes to the altar, and compelled Themistocles to sacrifice them.

So when AEneas was to perform the last kind office for his friend Pallas, he sacrificed (besides numerous oxen, sheep, and swine) eight captives to the infernal gods. In this he followed the example of Achilles, who had caused twelve Trojans of high birth to bleed by the sacerdotal knife, over the ashes of his friend Patroclus.

A hundred feet in length, a hundred wide,
The glowing structure spreads on every side,
High on the top the manly course they lay,
And well-fed sheep and sable oxen slay;
Achilles covered with their fat the dead,
And the piled victims round the body spread;
Then jars of honey and of fragrant oil
Suspend around, low bending oer the pile.
Four sprightly coursers with a deadly groan
Pour forth their lives, and on the pyre are thrown
Of nine large dogs, domestic at his board,
Fell two, selected to attend their lord:

The last of all, and horrible to tell,
Sad sacrifice! twelve Trojan captives fell;
On these the rage of fire victorious preys,
Involves and joins them in one common blaze.
Smear'd with the bloody rites, he stands on high,
And calls the spirit with a cheerful cry,
All hail, Patroclus! let thy vengeful ghost
Hear, and exult on Plutos dreary coast.
POPES Homer, IL. xxiii. ver. 203

How much was it to be lamented, that even civilized natures should forget the intention for which sacrifices were originally instituted! The bad effects, however, would not have been either so extensive or so great, had they not wholly lost the knowledge of Jehovah; and taken, as the object of their fear, that evil and apostate spirit whose name, with the utmost propriety is called Apollyon, or the destroyer, and whose worship has been universally diffused at different periods among all the nations of the earth.

The practice of shedding human blood before the altars of their gods was not peculiar to the Trojans and the Greeks; the Romans followed their example. In the first ages of their republic they sacrificed children to the goddess Mania; in later periods, numerous gladiators bled at the tombs of the patricians, to appease the manes of the deceased. And it is particularly noticed of Augustus, that, after the taking of Perusia, he sacrificed on the ides of March, three hundred senators and knights to the divinity of Julius Caesar.

(Editor's Note: I have omitted several paragraphs in which Dr. Clarke presents cases from various countries to illustrate the point of the above paragraph. Those interested may see the complete discussion in his Commentary on the New Testament.)

Though in the preceding notes I have endeavored to make every point as clear and plain as possible; yet it may be necessary, in order to see the scope of the apostles design more distinctly, to take a general survey of the whole. No man has written with more judgment on this epistle than Dr. Taylor, and from his notes I borrow the principal part of the following observations.

The principal thing that requires to be settled in this chapter is, what kind of election and reprobation the apostle is arguing about: whether election, by the absolute decree and purpose of God, to eternal life; and reprobation, by a like absolute decree, to eternal misery; or only election to the present privileges and external advantages of the kingdom of God in this world; and reprobation, or rejection, as it signifies the not being favored with those privileges and advantages. I think it demonstrably clear that it is the latter election and rejection the apostle is discoursing on, and not the former; as the following considerations appear to me to demonstrate.

I. The subject of the apostles argument is manifestly such privileges as are enumerated, Romans 9:4, 5: Who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption, etc. From these privileges he supposes the Jews had fallen, or would fall; or, that for a long time they

would be deprived of the benefit of them. For it is with regard to the loss of those privileges that he was so much concerned for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, Romans 9:2, 3. And it is with reference to their being stripped of these privileges that he vindicates the word and righteousness of God, Romans 9:24. Not as though the word of God had taken no effect, or failed, etc.; proving that God, according to his purpose of election, was free to confer them upon any branch of Abrahams family: consequently, those privileges were the singular blessings which by the purpose of God according to election, not of works, but of him that calleth, were conferred upon Jacobs posterity. But those privileges were only such as the whole body of the Israelites enjoyed in this world, while they were the Church and people of God, and such privileges as they might afterwards lose, or of which they might be deprived; therefore the election of Jacobs posterity to those privileges was not an absolute election to eternal life.

II. Agreeably to the purpose of God according to election, it was said unto Rebecca, The elder shall serve the younger, meaning the posterity of the elder and the younger; Genesis 25:23: The Lord said unto her, two NATIONS are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE; and the elder shall serve the younger. These are the words which signify the purpose of God according to election: therefore the election refers to Jacobs posterity, or the whole nation of Israel. But all the nation of Israel were not absolutely elected to eternal life: therefore the purpose of God according to election referred to temporal and not to eternal blessings, and was a privilege of which they might be deprived.

III. Agreeably to the purpose of God according to election, it was said to Rebecca, The elder shall serve the younger; but to serve, in Scripture, never meant to be eternally damned in the world to come: consequently the opposite blessing, bestowed upon the posterity of the younger, could not be eternal salvation, but certain privileges in this life; therefore the purpose according to election refers to those privileges, and the servitude does not imply everlasting perdition.

IV. The election the apostle speaks of is not of works, Romans 9:11, but of the mere will of God, who calls and invites, and refers to no qualifications in the persons thus elected and called. But in no part of the sacred writings is final salvation said to be given to any who are not qualified by holiness to receive and enjoy it; therefore election to eternal glory cannot be what the apostle speaks of in this epistle.

V. The election of which the apostle speaks took place, first in Abraham and his seed, before his seed was born; and then (secluding Ishmael and all his posterity) in Isaac and his seed before they were born. And then, secluding Esau and all his posterity, in Jacob and his seed before they were born. But the Scripture no where represents eternal life as bestowed upon any family or race of men in this manner; therefore this election mentioned by the apostle cannot be an election unto eternal life.

VI. Vessels of mercy, Romans 9:23, are manifestly opposed to vessels of wrath, Romans 9:22. The vessels of mercy are the whole body of the Jews and Gentiles, who were called

or invited into the kingdom of God under the Gospel, Romans 9:24; consequently, the vessels of wrath are the whole body of the unbelieving Jews. So in Romans 9:30, 31, the whole body of believing Gentiles, who, according to Gods purpose of election, had attained justification, are opposed to the whole body of the Israelites, who came short of it. But men shall not be received into eternal life or subjected to eternal damnation at the last day in collective bodies, but according as particular persons in those bodies have acted well or ill; therefore, this election is not of these particular bodies unto eternal life, etc.

VII. Whoever carefully peruses the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, will find that those who have not believed, Romans 11:31, are the present rejected Jews, or that Israel to whom blindness hath happened in part, Romans 11:25; the same who fell, and on whom God hath shown severity, Romans 11:22; the same with the natural branches whom God spared not, Romans 11:21; who were broken off from the olive tree, Romans 11:20, 19, 17; who were cast away, Romans 11:15; who were diminished and fallen, Romans 11:12; who had stumbled, Romans 11:11; who were a disobedient and, gainsaying people, Romans 10:21; who, being ignorant of Gods righteousness, went about to establish their own, Romans 10:3; because they sought righteousness, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Romans 9:32, and therefore had not attained to the law of righteousness, Romans 9:31; the same people spoken of in all these places, are the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, Romans 9:22, and the same for whom Paul had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart, Romans 9:2, 3; -in short, they are the unbelieving nation, or people of Israel; and it is with regard to the reprobation or rejection of this people that he is arguing and vindicating the truth, justice, and wisdom of God in this ninth chapter.

Now, if we turn back and review those three chapters, we shall find that the apostle, Romans 11:1, heartily desired and prayed that those same reprobated and rejected people of Israel might be saved; he affirms that they had not stumbled so as to fall finally and irrecoverably, Romans 11:11; that they should have again a fullness, Romans 11:12; that they should be received again into the Church, Romans 11:16; that a holiness still belonged to them, Romans 11:16; that if they did not still abide in unbelief, they should be grafted into their own olive tree again, Romans 11:23, 24; that blindness had happened unto them only for a time, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, Romans 11:25; and then he proves from Scripture, that all Israel-all those nations at present under blindness, shall be saved, Romans 11:26, 27; that, as touching the (original) election, they were still beloved for the fathers, the patriarchs, sake, Romans 11:28; that, in their case, the gifts and calling of God were without repentance, Romans 11:29; that through our (the believing Gentiles) mercy, they shall at length obtain mercy, Romans 11:31. All these several things are spoken of that Israel, or the body of people concerning whose rejection the apostle argues in the ninth chapter. And therefore the rejection which he there argues about cannot be absolute reprobation to eternal damnation, but to their being, as a nation, stripped of those honors and privileges of Gods peculiar Church and kingdom in this world, to which, at a certain future period, they shall again be restored.

VIII. Once more: whoever carefully peruses those three chapters will find that the people who in times past believed not God, but have NOW obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews, Romans 11:30, are the whole body of the believing Gentiles; the same who were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive tree, Romans 11:24, 17; the same to whom God hath shown goodness, Romans 11:22; the WORLD that was reconciled, Romans 11:15; the GENTILES who were enriched by the diminishing of the Jews, Romans 11:12; to whom salvation came through their fall, Romans 11:11; the Gentiles who had attained to righteousness, (justification,) Romans 9:30; who had not been Gods people, nor believed; but now were his people, beloved, and children of the living God, Romans 9:25, 26; even US whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, out also of the Gentiles, Romans 9:24, who are the vessels of mercy, on whom God has made known the riches of his glory, Romans 9:23; the vessels made unto honor, Romans 9:21. He speaks of the same body of men in all these places; namely, of the believing Gentiles principally, but not excluding the small remnant of the believing Jews, who were incorporated with them. And it is this body of men, whose calling and election he is proving, in whose case the purpose of God according to election stands good, Romans 9:11, and who are the children of the promise that are counted for the seed, Romans 9:8: these are the election, or the elect.

Now, concerning this called or elect body of people, or any particular person belonging to this body, the apostle writes thus, Romans 11:20-22: Well, because of unbelief, they (the Jews) were broken off, (reprobated, rejected,) and thou standest (in the Church among Gods called and elect) by faith; be not high minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, (the Jews,) take heed, lest he also spare not thee, (the Gentiles.) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them (the Jews) which fell, severity; but towards thee (believing Gentiles) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off, rejected, reprobated. This proves that the calling, and election, for which the apostle is arguing in the ninth chapter, is not absolute election unto eternal life, but to the present privileges of the Church-the honors and advantages of Gods peculiar people; which election, through unbelief and misimprovement, may be rendered void and come to nothing. See Dr. Taylor, p. 330, etc.

From thus carefully considering the apostles discourse, and taking in his scope and design, and weighing the different expressions he uses, in connection with the Scripture facts and Scripture phrases employed in describing those facts, we must be fully convinced that the doctrines of eternal, absolute, unconditional election and reprobation have no place here, and that nothing but a pre-established creed, and a total inattention to the apostles scope and design, could ever have induced men to bend these scriptures to the above purpose, and thus to endeavor to establish as articles of faith, doctrines which, far from producing glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men, have filled the Church of God with contention, set every mans sword against his brother, and thus done the work of Apollyon in the name of Christ. If men will maintain these and such like for Scriptural doctrines, it is but reasonable to request that it be done in the spirit of the Gospel.