

# NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS

STUDIES IN MEMORY OF  
**Thomas Walter Manson**  
1893-1958

sponsored by  
PUPILS, COLLEAGUES  
AND FRIENDS

edited by  
**A. J. B. HIGGINS**  
*Lecturer in New Testament Language  
and Literature in the University  
of Leeds*

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

© 1959

*Published by the University of Manchester at*  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
*316-324 Oxford Road, Manchester 13*

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

NOTES ON THE ARGUMENT OF ROMANS  
(CHAPTERS 1-8)

by

W. MANSON

---

QUESTIONS numerous as bees about a hive beset the critical approach to the Epistle to the Romans, but in the main the interest settles down around two primary concerns. One relates to the character of the Roman Christian community: Was it Jewish-Christian or Gentile-Christian in its composition, and is any evidence on the point to be extracted from the Epistle? The problem here lies in the circumstance that while the writer names his readers as Gentiles or assumes their Gentilic character, he everywhere argues with them as if their religious background was Jewish. The other question starts from the Epistle itself: Does its matter stand in substantive and apposite relation to the character of the Roman community, or is it possible that a general statement of Pauline evangelistic teaching was incorporated with covering matter in the Apostle's letter to the as yet unvisited Church at Rome? The latter view has been advanced to account for the existence of variant recensions of the Epistle in the early centuries. Less doubtfully it may help to explain the dislocation between the Gentile-Christian address of the latter and the predominantly Jewish-Christian orientation of the subject-matter.

1. The question regarding the origin and religious history of the Roman Christian community has an interest going beyond any precise conclusions to be drawn from the Epistle. We have to distinguish the Church-history issue from the literary problem posed by the letter. A tradition handed down by the patristic commentator 'Ambrosiaster' (c. 370) states that the Roman Christians were originally Gentiles, but received the gospel from believing Jews who *tradiderunt Romanis ut Christum profitentes legem servarent*. Without having seen any miracles or been visited by any apostle

they had taken up the Christian faith *ritu licet Judaico*.<sup>1</sup> This interesting tradition was taken by F. C. Baur, together with what appeared to be the supporting evidence of St. Paul's Epistle, to establish the Judaic character of Roman Christianity. With the waning of the influence of Baur's theoretical construction of Church history, there came a reaction away from this position. The Gentile character of the Church has been affirmed by a majority of modern scholars, a notable exception being the historian Eduard Meyer,<sup>2</sup> who has re-asserted its Judaic complexion, and certainly if St. Paul's letter was composed with an eye on the Roman community, it is difficult to see that any other conclusion than Meyer's is satisfactory. The present writer has elsewhere set down what seems to him irresistible material arguments in favour of the Judaic view.<sup>3</sup> Two considerations are of quite paramount importance. (a) There is the circumstance already noted that, while the Apostle names or classifies his readers as among the 'Gentiles' (1:5, 6, 11:13, 11:13, 15:16, etc.), he argues with them everywhere as if their religious training was Jewish (e.g. 4:1, 7:1, 7:6, 9, 10, etc. (b) There is the striking absence in the Epistle of allusion to those characteristic aberrations of a speculative-gnostic type which in other letters, such as Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Colossians, are associated with Gentile Churches. All these considerations would, however, lose their force if there was a reason to think that the didactic substance of the Epistle was not originally framed with specific reference to Rome.

2. The textual phenomena presented by the Epistle constitute, in Lietzmann's words, 'ein eigenes und höchst kompliziertes Problem'.<sup>4</sup> There is, first, the well-known textual disturbance manifest in the variant positions of the doxology which our best uncial authorities exhibit at 16:25-7. There is, secondly, the omission in G of *ἐν Ῥώμῃ* at 1:7 and of *τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ* at 1:15. Dr. Kirsopp Lake has submitted these phenomena to patient examination,<sup>5</sup> and decides on the strength of evidence drawn from the chapter-divisions of Codex Amiatinus of the Vulgate, from Cyprian's *Testimonia*, and from Tertullian, that in the second and succeeding centuries a recension of Romans was current which omitted chapters 15 and 16 and ended with the doxology at 14:23. This recension also lacked the references to Rome in 1:7 and 1:15, and was only gradually abandoned, Lake thinks, in favour of the long recension. Nevertheless Lake has to admit the genuinely Pauline

authorship of chapter 15. It is organically connected with chapter 14, and cannot be considered a later addition to the short recension by another hand. 'We have to face the existence of the long recension as genuinely Pauline.' Lake offers in explanation of the two recensions the alternative hypotheses: either (1) St. Paul's letter was the long recension, and the short recension was made by someone else (Marcion), or (2) St. Paul wrote both recensions, 'issuing the letter in two forms, either simultaneously or successively'.<sup>6</sup> Lake personally inclines to the latter view.

The case for this hypothesis, however, according to which the Apostle emitted, simultaneously or successively, two different versions of his letter, creates difficulties. It leaves unsolved the question, what then did Marcion do? According to the statement in Rufinus' translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans 16:25-7), Marcion removed the Doxology from the Epistle (*penitus abstulit*) and also cut away everything from 14:23 to the end (*usque ad finem cuncta dissecuit*). If this means anything, it means that Marcion's basis of operations was the longer recension which extended beyond 14:23. Marcion had this longer text, and if what he did was not to *produce* the short recension, what was it? To assume the currency of a short recension in the West in order to avoid the conclusion that Cyprian, Tertullian, and the chapter-divisions of Codex Amiatinus were somehow all indebted to Marcion for their text of Romans is to save the face of these authorities at the expense of putting Marcion out of business. The case, then, is against a short text of Romans having existed in the West before, and independently of Marcion. What was first there was a longer text including at least chapter 15.

A more helpful approach to a solution of the problem has been offered by Dr. T. W. Manson,<sup>7</sup> and is discussed by Dr. Johannes Munck.<sup>8</sup> Basing his position on Chester-Beatty Papyrus Codex 46 which was not available when Lake wrote his *Earlier Epistles*, but which contains the doxology at the end of Romans 15, Manson contends that this third-century codex incorporates the original form of the letter which St. Paul sent to Rome, and which was the basis on which Marcion got to work. As St. Paul wrote the letter, it was without the doxology and chapter 16, but the argument is that a copy was simultaneously sent to Ephesus, occasion being taken by the Apostle to add chapter 16 with its personal greetings to Ephesian friends. This composite copy came

later *via* Ephesus to Egypt, and there the Roman and Ephesian texts were worked together into the final form now represented by Papyrus Codex 46.

The reason why St. Paul sent a copy to Ephesus as well as to Rome was that the letter epitomized the main theological positions reached by himself in the course of his long controversy over the relations of Law and Gospel in the Churches. The didactic substance of the letter was not originally framed with a view to the Roman Church. Perhaps in this way we account for the dislocation between the Gentile address of Romans and the intimate Jewish colour and background of its theology.

## ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

### I. APOSTOLIC SALUTATION AND ADDRESS TO THE ROMAN CHURCH (1:1-17)

This touches on three main topics.

(1) The subject of the Apostle's gospel is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whose revelational significance the Apostle defines by reference to the two successive stages of His manifestation: (a) the earthly life (*κατὰ σάρκα*) in which Jesus appeared as Davidic Messiah, (b) the post-resurrection existence (*κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης*) in which He is 'definitively presented' through the Holy Spirit as Son of God 'in power' (1:3-4). It is the same Son of God who is demonstrated in both stadia. The antithetic terms 'flesh', 'spirit' do not divide His substance but unfold the economy of His manifestation. The sublimation of the first phase in the second, by which the second becomes definitive for the understanding of the whole presentation, makes this passage the key to the enigmatic word (2 Cor. 5:16) about our no longer knowing Christ after the flesh. The Jesus of Jewish history is also supra-historical.

(2) The Apostle's interest in the Roman Christians (1:10, cf. 15:23) rests on his commission to preach the gospel 'among all the Gentiles' (1:5, 1:14): compare 15:16, 'that I should be a priest (*leitourγός*) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, exercising the sacral office in the sphere of the gospel of God.' The Gentile-Christian character of the Church addressed seems clearly indicated unless the term 'Gentiles' is given a merely geographical connotation. The special purpose of St. Paul's projected visit to Rome is the

communication of a 'spiritual gift' (χάρισμα), but the Apostle with the delicacy natural to one approaching a Church not founded by, or known to himself, amends this into: 'that I may share with you the encouragement which our common faith inspires, yours and mine' (1:11-12). So explained the 'spiritual gift' is not necessarily an imparting of apostolic order or foundation to an *ex hypothesi* as yet inchoate religious community, but rather a contribution to the common faith.

(3) Faced by daunting circumstances, the multiplicity of salvation-cults offered to mankind in the contemporary world, the antipathy of Jews and Judaizing Christians to his teaching, and the aversion of those who dislike him and fancy he will not show his face among them (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18 f.), the Apostle comes to Rome and relies on the gospel as God's instrument for effecting men's 'salvation'. In a world that yearns for redemption, he has found it to be God's *δύναμις*, God's way of getting that redemption accomplished (1:16. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:21-4), and this because it opens up a 'righteousness of God' for men, a way of salvation which does justice to the moral reality of God's relations with men, while at the same time enabling men's restoration to right relations with God. At the supreme crisis in history marked by the coming of Jesus Christ, God's righteousness, while declaring His condemnation of the world's sin (*ὀργή, κρίμα, δικαιοκρασία*), offers absolution (*δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*) through the work of Christ.

## II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

A. *This Righteousness of God is on its negative side His Judgement upon a world that is apostate from Himself* (1:18-3:20). The indictment is directed against (a) the ethnic world (1:18-32), (b) the Jewish people (2:1-29), (c) the guilt of all humanity before God (3:1-20).

The verb *ἀποκαλύπτεται* (1:18) indicates, when taken with the same term in 1:17, that the 'Wrath' of God here introduced belongs to the same disclosure as His 'Righteousness'. It is organic to the gospel as a sign of the eschatological crisis, the *κρίσις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου* (John 12:21), which has come with Christ. While the indictment of the ethnic and the Jewish worlds in these chapters is grounded formally on the moral facts of the human situation, the real starting-point is Christ and His cross. This has given the Apostle the luminous centre from which he looks at the sin

of the world, the holiness of God, and the grace and wonder of forgiveness. The latency of the gospel under the indictment appears clearly when the edge of the argument happens to be turned up as it is in 2:16.

(a) The gravamen of the charge against the pagan world is that it has rejected the divine revelation given to it in creation. God has made His eternal power and divinity known, not indeed to the eye, but to the mind or *νοῦς* of man (1:19-20). The indictment follows the lines of the traditional Jewish-Hellenistic theology developed at Alexandria (cf. Wisdom 13), but has a vigour and force which are Paul's own. The nations have turned from revelation to embrace the 'lie' of idolatry, and God has handed them over to the moral consequences of their apostasy. 'Because (despite the evidence offered) they refused to acknowledge God as real, God has given them over to a mind now void of all sense of the real' (1:28). Nothing is said about eschatological promises being given to the world at large.

(b) In 2:1-29 the argument graduates from the Gentiles to the Jews, whose guilt lies in the pride which has led them, as the privileged recipients of an eschatological revelation, to overlook the moral realities of their existing situation. If in the preceding section the Apostle had Wisdom 13 in mind, here he is thinking of Wisdom 15 where the Jewish writer turns from the heathen with the comforting reflection: 'But Thou, our God, art gracious, true, long-suffering. . . . Even if we sin, we are Thine, etc.' This delusion of the Jew lies behind the Apostle's taunt in 2:3-4. While acknowledging the magnificent privilege of the Diaspora Jew (2:17-20), he presses the rigour of God's ethical demand. The Jew has in the Law 'the very embodiment of religious knowledge and divine truth', but the Gentile also has an inward law, the sanctions of which he recognizes in conscience, philosophy, and life. Thus Jew and Gentile stand alike before the one tribunal of God's inexorable holiness, and this, according to the Apostle's gospel, is the judgment-seat of Christ (2:16).

(c) In 3:1-21 the Apostle sums up. The tests of law and truth have as applied to men revealed their total bankruptcy in a moral point of view. No righteousness but that of God remains. If man's relation to God is to be rectified, it must be by the operation of that divine righteousness, not man's own. *Διὰ γὰρ νόμον* comes only *ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας* (3:20).



B. *The Righteousness of God is in its positive aspect the Atonement effected for us by God in Jesus Christ, who is the Ἰλαστήριον, the Agent or Ground set forward by God for the Expiation of sin (3:21-5:21).*

The Apostle here presents the Righteousness of God as (a) manifested (*πεφανέρωται*) in Jesus Christ (3:21-30), (b) underlying the Old Testament and establishing the Law (3:31-4:25), (c) verified by its results in Christian experience (5:1-11), and (d) marking the Great Divide between the past world-age of Sin and Death and a new world-age of Righteousness and Life (5:12-21).

(a) This righteousness is *χωρὶς νόμου*, but being prefigured in the law and the prophets it signifies no dismissal of law as an eternal factor in the determination of divine-human relations. Rather it means the transcending of law by the gracious act of God in Christ. If law is marked off from this transaction, it is, as Denney says, in the sense in which a Jew laid stress on his fulfilment of the Mosaic commandments or a Gentile on his life according to natural law as constituting a claim upon God. All such claim is excluded by the moral failure of the recipients (3:23) and by the nature of the 'redemption' (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) effected for men in the 'forth-setting' of the Christ as our *ἰλαστήριον*. He is the manifestation (*ἐνδειξις*) of God's will so to present His righteousness as effectually to cover us with regard both to past guilt and to the institution of a totally new relation between God and our souls (3:25-6). Faith, the condition of acceptance, is essentially the abandonment of all self-righteousness, it is the casting of ourselves on God (3:27-8). The language employed—the 'forth-setting' of Christ and the 'exhibition' of divine righteousness—is to be understood in a dynamic and activist, not in a merely demonstrative sense, God has acted not merely to vindicate His integrity (3:25) but to make His righteousness *operative* henceforth in us (3:26). The result is the supersession of legal religion (3:27).

In this exposition the expiatory sacrifice of Christ is the pivotal conception on which the relations of God and man are finally seen to turn. While elsewhere (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3-4) other metaphors are employed to describe the redemptive work of Christ, the expressions all converge on His being an 'asham' for the guilt of men. The righteousness of God is thus no mere overflowing of His goodness and mercy, but is conditioned by the atoning act of Jesus, in whom alone the reality of sin is grappled with and disposed of, and the righteousness of God made

*transitive* to us as the only righteousness we can ever have. In this representation—

(i) 'Righteousness' retains its biblical sense, in which it has been defined as 'the triumphant assertion or action of God's sovereign will, whether in requiring obedience, or in achieving victory over man's rebellion, or in victoriously accomplishing man's salvation'. It is used here in this third or eschatological sense.

(ii) The righteousness of God is a concept primordial to Christianity, for it is implied in our Lord's requirement 'Repent', for 'the Kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:15), also in His word, 'seek first the Kingdom and the righteousness of God' (Matt. 6:33). In response to this demand men may turn, and their lives take a new direction towards God, but can they give themselves a new mentality, a new nature, a new heart? And faced by the Sermon on the Mount, man may acknowledge the perfection of God's commandment, but can he achieve full obedience to it by his own power or righteousness? Inevitably what God here requires He must Himself put our way. Christianity sees this truth flashing in the vicarious obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

(b) St. Paul's particular description of this communicated 'righteousness' as justification by 'faith' is due to his doctrine being hammered out on the anvil of his anti-Jewish conflict in which his gospel of grace was opposed by determined insistence on 'works'. Over against the latter position the Apostle contends that the gospel is the true vindication of the law (*νόμον ιστάνομεν*, 3:31), since the law itself preaches faith. In proof he cites God's acceptance of Abraham (Gen. 15:6) and the blessedness of the forgiven whose sins are 'covered' (Ps. 31:1-2). Law, prophecy, and the hagiographa attest a righteousness conferred upon and covering man which is not man's own but God's. While the appeal to Abraham leaves much in the Abraham story out of account, at one point it brings the patriarch's faith very close to the substance of the Christian religion, and that is where Abraham's faith in God's promise is interpreted as essentially 'faith in the God who gives life to the dead' (4:17), thus being an anticipation of Christian trust in the resurrection of Jesus (4:24-5).

(c) In Romans 5:1-11 the doctrine of divine Righteousness is taken to the test of Christian experience. As 'justified' by faith, that is, as covered by the saving action of God in Christ, we are taken out of the condemnation of the sinful consciousness into a

status of grace and peace, and are given a new hope through God (5:1-2). St. Paul analyses the nature of the Christian's assurance that the tide in divine-human relations has turned (5:3-4), finding its ground in the palpable fact that 'the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit imparted to us' (5:5). When the persecutor of the Church capitulated to Christ, he had identified the upsurge of love in his own soul with the experience which the Nazarenes described as the descent of the Holy Spirit. Now, in stammering words that necessitate more than one effort at successful expression, he sets over against all limited human ideas of justice the ineffable proof of divine love given in the fact—he is thinking of himself—that 'while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (5:6-8). This release of love in Christian hearts is for the Apostle the sign that the eschatological order of grace has broken into time. The 'much more' argument significantly makes its entrance at this point (5:9-10). 'If, being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being now reconciled, we shall attain salvation by His life.' This statement is important as asserting the Christological basis of the whole Christian life: cf. chapters 6-8.

(d) The note of 'triumph' (5:11) suitably introduces a section in which the Apostle, conscious of having attained a climax in his argument, is conscious also of having reached the high watershed of *Heilsgeschichte* (5:12-21). From the altitude at which he can say 'We have received the Reconciliation (*τὴν καταλλαγὴν*)', the entire past history of the race appears as a domination of life by death through the separation of man from God by sin. 'As through one man sin entered the cosmos, and death through sin, and thus death passed to all men because all men sinned' (5:12)—the sentence which has started off with words derived from Wisd. 2:24 here breaks off, because the writer is diverted at this moment by the necessity (5:13-14) of explaining some of his terms, leaving his further meaning to be supplied from the sequel. But certain things are clear. *Heilsgeschichte* divides into two aeons. At the head of the first stands Adam in corporate relation with the race. At the head of the other stands Jesus Christ, head of the new humanity through His representative action on our behalf. Over against the 'fall' or 'trespass' of Adam (*παράπτωμα, παρακοή*) stands Christ's 'act of righteousness' or 'obedience' (*δικαίωμα, ὑπακοή*), over against 'condemnation' (*κατάκριμα*) stands 'acquit-

tal' or 'justification' (*δικαίωσις ζωῆς, δικαιοσύνη*), over against the reign of death through sin stands the reign of life through 'righteousness'. But, as St. Paul insists, this is no mere balancing of accounts. 'It is not a case of the gift of grace (*χάρισμα*) merely corresponding to the transgression' (*παράπτωμα, 5:15*). The old order is overwhelmingly reversed: 'Where sin (multiplied by law) has come to its full measure, grace has flowed beyond all measure' (5:20).

One or two comments may here be made,

(i) Grace has come when, through the operation of law, sin had attained its full quantum (5:20).

(ii) The two orders, the new and the old, now exist in the world together.

(iii) The order of sin dates from Adam, whose express act of disobedience introduced it, but the organic connection between Adam's sin and ours is not made clear. If indeed the statement *ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἡμαρτον* should refer to men's individual sins, we have here an overlap from the Jewish position that every man is the Adam of his own soul, but this would have no counterpart on the Christian side of the account. It is therefore better to take the *ἐφ' ᾧ* (Old Latin *in quo*) as bringing out the corporate solidarity of human guilt—'all men sinned in Adam'.

(iv) Death is conceived not merely biologically but theologically or, if the expression may be allowed, *sacramentally*: that is, biological death is the sign or symbol of the extinction of man's spiritual life in God. That loss is now made good in the 'eternal life', also sacramental, which the righteous act of Christ has procured (5:21).

C. *The Righteousness of God in its concrete effects is the Incorporation of our lives into Christ through the Spirit. Here is the radical meaning of Justification by Grace and the finality of Christian Faith* (6:1-8:39).

The argument takes account (a) of what is effected in Christian baptism (6:3-14), (b) of the new service into which Christians have entered (6:15-7:6), (d) of the dethronement of sin and the victory of life in the new Christian order (8:1-39). Into this scheme is intercalated (c) a dialectical analysis of the nature of life under law (7:7-25).

(a) The Apostle, concerned to establish that Christians reconciled

to God by the death of His Son will be saved by His Life (5:10), dismisses first the captious charge that to emphasize abounding grace is to put a premium on sin: 'Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?' (cf. 3:7-8). His answer is that this charge forgets the nature of what takes place in Christian baptism. Lietzmann suggests that St. Paul here is merely trying to give an ethical direction to the sacramentalist tendencies of Hellenistic Christians. The truth rather is—cf. 6:3 'Do you not know, etc.?'—that he is *injecting* a profounder and more radical sacramentalism into their ordinary thinking. He is not so much qualifying the sacramental as raising it to its full significance for faith. The ordinary Christian interpreted baptism as a cleansing from sin, or as an initiation into the eschatological community of salvation. St. Paul insists that it means the incorporation of the Christian into Christ, so that sacramentally he is dead in Christ to sin, and alive in Him to righteousness. 'Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ (i.e. to belong to Him) were baptized into His death (i.e. to share His death and resurrection)?' The Apostle illustrates this truth by reference to the symbolism of the rite (6:4). Baptism is the *ἁμοίωμα*, the concrete representation, or effectual sign, of Christ's death and life in its application to the Christian. 'Our former personality has been crucified with Him that the sinful body might be rendered inactive . . . He who is dead has been pronounced free from sin' (6:6-7). But though this status in Christ is sacramentally complete, it has to be ethically actualized by faith (6:8), knowledge (6:9), and obedience (6:12-14). Clearly St. Paul is here not abandoning justification by faith for a new ground of life in 'Christ-mysticism', but showing Christ-mysticism to be the conclusion to which by inner logic justification leads.

(b) Against antinomian dangers St. Paul also places the fact that the transition from law to grace leaves no middle ground of autonomous Christian freedom (6:14-23). He hesitates to apply the word *δουλεία* to the life of grace, but does not reject it altogether. The biblical term *'ebed* primarily connotes personal obligation to a master and, as such, St. Paul retains it. Changing the metaphor, he compares the transition from law to Christ to the release of a woman from marriage by the death of her husband (7:1-6). The illustration is not happy, for the law does not die. The Apostle's point, however, is that the Christian is freed from law through

the death of Christ (*διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*) in order to transfer to the risen Lord his total devotion.

(c) The sinister part ascribed to law as inciting sinful *παθήματα* in the soul wedded to it (7:5-6) and generally the intimate conjunction in which it stands with the sin-flesh-death complex of ideas leads the Apostle at this point to clear up certain ambiguities in his teaching. Apart altogether from his indicting of Jewish legalism in its opposition to the gospel as enmity towards God, certain expressions of his seemed to suggest that he made the law responsible for sin (7:7). This idea Paul repels. As that which exposes sin, the law stands off from sin, flesh, and death as 'spiritual', as 'holy and just and good' (7:12-14). On the other hand, and bearing in mind the question (6:15): 'Are we ever to sin because we are not *ὑπὸ νόμον* but *ὑπὸ χάριτι*', St. Paul has to dispel the opposite assumption that the practice of law *per se* has saving value. There were in his Churches those who, like the persons indicted in Gal. 3:2-5, had started the Christian life in dependence on the Spirit but later proposed to supplement faith by legal observances. St. Paul's answer in Galatians is well-known, but possibly the existence elsewhere of the same tendencies explains why at this point, when defending the principle that the Christian is not under law but under grace, he throws the weight of his argument into what is really a psycho-analytic exposure of the state of the soul *ὑπὸ νόμον*. In the whole delineation accordingly (7:7-25) no account is taken for the moment of the element of grace either in Judaism or in Christianity. The Apostle affirms:

(i) That while law exposes sin, it has also the psychological effect of exciting it (7:7-8). Rebellious instincts, latent or moribund in the soul, are aroused by the No of the commandment, and St. Paul says he has not been a stranger to the experience (7:9-11). But was there ever an actual time when Paul lived *ἄνομος*? The difficulty of locating such a time in his historical experience, coupled with the hyperbolic nature of his expressions—'I died' (*ἀπέθανον*) and 'Sin deceived me' (*ἐξηπάτησεν*, recalling the language used of the serpent by Eve in Gen. 3:13, LXX)—suggests that here the Apostle is not speaking historically of himself, but theologically. He is seeing all human life, his own included, against the background of Gen. 3.

(ii) Man's weakness *ὑπὸ νόμον* is grounded in the circumstance that, though the commandment is beneficent, sin has invaded and

usurped control over his *σάραξ*. It is the essence of demonic evil that it takes the holy law of God and makes it an instrument of ruin to our corrupted nature (7:13-15). Paul, like every son of Adam, recognizes himself as in this matter 'sold' (*πεπραμένος*) under sin. The law, though exposing sin, cannot extricate us from its demonic sway.

(iii) What follows in 7:15-25 is a dialectical analysis of the slave-relation so described. The Greek Fathers, founding on the hopelessness of the condition depicted, have seen in the chapter a transparent account of the Apostle's pre-baptismal experience, the Western Fathers, notably St. Augustine, and the Reformers, especially Calvin, founding on the goodness of the will or *νοῦς* engaged in the conflict, having given the analysis a post-baptismal reference. But if the Apostle was writing of his unregenerate experience in Judaism, why have the glory and grace of God vanished from the Torah? And if he was writing of his Christian experience, why is no mention of grace made until the end (7:24)? If we take the representation as autobiographical in any strict or real sense, we are in the curious position of having to say that *either it reflects a Judaism in which the glory has passed from the law, or a Christianity in which the glory has not yet arisen on the gospel!* For this reason the chapter should be taken rather as a dialectical analysis of the state of the naturally sin-enslaved soul *ὑπὸ νόμον*. This is made definitely certain by the conclusion of the argument in 7:25, where the subject of the representation is described as *αὐτός ἐγώ*.

(d) With chapter 8 we pass out again into the sunshine of the life of grace. The *κατακρίμα* inseparable from life under the law (cf. 3:20) has been lifted not only by the acts of divine grace asserted in 3:21-26 and 5:12-21 but by the supplementary proofs established in 6:1-7:6 that the Christian life is no more a life in sin. A new principle, 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus', has become operative in it, ending the bondage under sin and death to which the former life was subject (8:2). For—and here St. Paul's conception expands to take in the full cosmic and apocalyptic dimensions of the Christian redemption—God's act in sending His Son to be incorporated in humanity and to become a sin-offering for us has dethroned sin from its absolute empire in our nature, and has introduced the Age of the Spirit (8:3-4). Christian life is life on this renewed level, i.e. the eschatological order of God has intersected our life in time, and we, though still

in the flesh, are sustained by the Spirit, or, as St. Paul alternatively puts it, by the indwelling of Christ. St. Paul analyses the nature of this life in grace.

(i) It is a life in which tension still exists between flesh and spirit, between the old nature and the new (8:4-11). Though dethroned by Christ's victory, sin has not been finally disarmed, because the existing world-order has not yet come to its end: 'the body indeed is dead on account of the sin (for which Christ suffered), and the spirit is alive on account of the righteousness (which He has achieved)' (8:10). But what has thus been sacramentally certified in baptism (6:3-14) has to be completed by the hallowing of personal life.

(ii) It is a life in which, through the new orientation of our spirits to the Spirit of God, man's sonship to God is recovered (8:12-17). St. Paul may well be thinking here of the position of simple Christians who, unable to rise to the height of his great argument—'no condemnation', 'peace with God', life with risen Christ—plead that all they can do is to fall on their knees and cry 'Our Father!' The Apostle accepts this protestation as itself the veriest proof of the Spirit's presence with believers (8:15-16. Cf. Gal. 4:6-7), but points out that God, having restored us to sonship, is not yet done with us. He has a future for His children: which is to make them 'inheritors of God and co-inheritors with Christ', if they accept present suffering with Christ as the condition of sharing His glory (8:17).

(iii) The suffering and frustration of present existence must be seen against the bright counterfoil of the glory towards which both in the cosmos and in the individual life, God's purpose of redemption is working (8:18-30). A *cosmic* redemption is proposed, of which man's spiritual redemption is a present first instalment. While man possesses the first-fruit of the Spirit, nature has to wait for its deliverance until man's re-instatement in the image of God is completed by the redemption of his 'body', which awaits the Resurrection (8:22-23). It is plain here that St. Paul thinks of man's present redemption as limited to his spirit. Meantime the Holy Spirit assists our weakness; a striking instance is the spiritual power of prayer (8:26-8).

(iv) In the end the Christian's assurance lies in the inalienable love of God, signified to us in His foreknowledge and predestination of us, in our calling, in our justification, and in God's final



purpose to glorify us (8:29-30). The Christian argument is unanswerable when we think of what is involved in the Incarnation and in the Death of the Redeemer (8:31-2), and on this note St. Paul ends. The Christian in his good fight of faith has overwhelming powers working on his side; for over against the physical forces of life and death, the arbitrary tyranny of demonic spirits, the unknown contingencies of present and future history, and the malign influence of the stellar powers, the Christian trusts that the Love of God in Christ will never forsake him (8:33-9).

It has not been possible within the limits of this survey to include chapters 9-11, dealing with 'The Righteousness of God in History', nor to bring to a fuller conclusion the question raised at the beginning concerning the relation of the matter of the Epistle to the specific community addressed. On this question, however, it seems probable that, even if the subject-matter was not originally thought out with an eye on the Roman Church, which is not certain, but represents the mature product of years of earlier debate with Jews and Gentiles throughout the world, the first occasion of its commitment to writing may well have been the Apostle's desire to open communications with the unvisited Church at Rome. Personal touches pervade the writing, and the design to give literary embodiment to the matter may have shaped itself in the writer's mind as the conveying of a truly apostolic charisma. In this matter the critical hypothesis of Dr. T. W. Manson is distinctly helpful.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> On the 'Ambrosiaster' passage see Sanday and Headlam's Commentary, p. xxv, and Zahn's *Introduction*, i, 431 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* (1923), iii, 465-7.

<sup>3</sup> W. Manson, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (1951), 172-84.

<sup>4</sup> HNT, *An die Römer*, 130.

<sup>5</sup> *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (1914), 335-70.

<sup>6</sup> Kirsopp Lake, *op. cit.*, 349-50.

<sup>7</sup> Article on 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', BJRL, 31 (1948), 224-40.

<sup>8</sup> *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte* (1954), 191-4.