



COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Chapter 10

Verse 1. *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, that they might be saved."*

He is now going again to rebuke them more vehemently than before. Wherefore he again does away with every suspicion of hatred, and makes a great effort beforehand to correct misapprehension. Do not then, he says, mind words or accusations, but observe that it is not in any hostile spirit that I say this. For it is not likely that the same person should desire their salvation, and not desire it only, but even pray for it, and yet should also hate them, and feel aversion to them. For here he calls his exceeding desire, and the prayer which he makes, "heart's desire." For it is not the being freed from punishment only, but that they may also be saved, that he makes so great a point of, and prays for. Nor is it from this only, but also from the sequel that he shows the goodwill that he hath towards them. For from what is open to him, as far as he can, he forces his way, and is contentious to find out some shadow at least of an excuse for them. And he hath not the power, being overcome by the nature of the facts.

Verse 2. *"For I bear them record," says he, "that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."*

Ought not this then to be a ground for pardoning and not for accusing them? For if it is not of man that they are separated, but through zeal, they deserved to be pitied rather than punished. But observe how adroitly he favors them in the word, and yet shows their unseasonable obstinacy.

Verse 3. *"For they being ignorant," he says, "of God's righteousness."*

Again the word would lead to pardon. But the sequel to stronger accusation, and such as does away with defense of any kind.

"And going about," he says, "to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

And these things he says to show, that it was from a petulancy and love of power that they erred, rather than from ignorance, and that not even this righteousness from the deeds of the Law did they establish. (Matthew 21:38; John. 12:19, 42.) For saying "going about to establish" is what one would do to show this. And in plain words indeed he has not stated this (for he has not said, that they fell short of both righteousnesses), but he has given a hint of it in a very judicious manner, and with the wisdom so befitting him. For if they are still "going about" to establish that, it is very plain that they have not yet established it. If they have not submitted themselves to this, they have fallen short of this also. But he

calls it their “own righteousness,” either because the Law was no longer of force, or because it was one of trouble and toil. But this he calls God’s righteousness, that from faith, because it comes entirely from the grace from above, and because men are justified in this case, not by labors, but by the gift of God. But they that evermore resisted the Holy Ghost, and vexatiously tried to be justified by the Law, came not over to the faith. But as they did not come over to the faith, nor receive the righteousness thereupon ensuing, and were not able to be justified by the Law either, they were thrown out of all resources.

Verse 4. *“For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

See the judgment of Paul. For as he had spoken of a righteousness, and a righteousness, lest they of the Jews which believed should seem to have the one but be excluded from the other, and to be accused of lawlessness (for even these there was no less cause to fear about as being still newly come in), and lest Jews should again expect to achieve it, and should say, Though we have not at present fulfilled it, yet we certainly will fulfill it, see what ground he takes. He shows that there is but one righteousness, and that has its full issue in this, and that he that hath taken to himself this, the one by faith, hath fulfilled that also. But he that rejects this, falls short as well of that also. For if Christ be “the end of the Law,” he that hath not Christ, even if he seem to have that righteousness, hath it not. But he that hath Christ, even though he have not fulfilled the Law aright, hath received the whole. For the end of the physician’s art is health. As then he that can make whole, even though he hath not the physician’s art, hath everything; but he that knows not how to heal, though he seem to be a follower of the art, comes short of everything: so is it in the case of the Law and of faith. He that hath this hath the end of that likewise, but he that is without this is an alien from both. For what was the object of the Law? To make man righteous. But it had not the power, for no one fulfilled it. This then was the end of the Law and to this it looked throughout, and for this all its parts were made, its feasts, and commandments, and sacrifices, and all besides, that man might be justified. But this end Christ gave a fuller accomplishment of through faith. Be not then afraid, he says, as if transgressing the Law in having come over to the faith. For then dost thou transgress it, when for it thou dost not believe Christ. If thou believest in Him, then thou hast fulfilled it also, and much more then it commanded. For thou hast received a much greater righteousness. Next, since this was an assertion, he again brings proof of it from the Scriptures.

Verse 5. *“For Moses,” he says, “describeth the righteousness which is of the Law.”*

What he means is this. Moses showeth us the righteousness ensuing from the Law, what sort it is of, and whence. What sort is it then of, and what does it consist in? In fulfilling the commandments. “He, that doeth these things,” He says, “shall live by (or in), them.” (Leviticus 18:5.) And there is no other way of becoming righteous in the Law save by fulfilling the whole of it. But this has not been possible for any one, and therefore this righteousness has failed them. But tell us, Paul, of the other righteousness also, that which is of grace. What is that then, and of what does it consist? Hear the words in which he gives a clear sketch of it. For after he had refuted the other, he next goes on to this, and says,

Verse 6, 7, 8, 9. *“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with*

thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

To prevent the Jews then from saying, How came they who had not found the lesser righteousness to find the greater? he gives a reason there was no answering, that this way was easier than that. For that requires the fulfillment of all things (for when thou doest all, then thou shall live): but the righteousness which is of faith doth not say this, but what? "It thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Then again that we may not seem to be making it contemptible by showing it to be easy and cheap? observe how he expands his account of it. For he does not come immediately to the words just given, but what does he say? "But the righteousness which is of faith saith on this wise; Say not in thine heart, Who shall go up into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)" For as to the virtue manifested in works there is opposed a listlessness, which relaxeth our labors, and it requireth a very wakeful soul not to yield to it: thus, when one is required to believe, there are reasonings which confuse and make havoc of the minds of most men, and it wants a soul of some vigor to shake them thoroughly off. And this is just why he brings the same before one. And as he did in Abraham's case, so he does here also. For having there shown that he was justified by faith, lest he should seem to have gotten so great a crown by a mere chance, as if it were a thing of no account, to extol the nature of faith, he says, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:18-21): so he showed that there is need of vigor, and a lofty soul, that takes in things beyond expectation, and stumbles not at appearances. This then he does here also, and shows that it requires a wise mind, and a spirit heavenly and great. And he does not say merely, "Say not," but, "Say not in thine heart," that is, do not so much as think of doubting and saying with thyself, And how can this be? You see that this is a chief characteristic of faith, to leave all the consequences of this lower world, and so to seek for that which is above nature, and to cast out the feebleness of calculation, and so to accept everything from the Power of God. The Jews, however, did not merely assert this, but that it was not possible to be justified by faith. But himself turns even what had taken place to another account, that having shown the thing to be so great, that even after it had taken place it required faith, he might seem with good reason to bestow a crown on these: and he uses the words which are found in the Old Testament, being always at pains to keep quite clear of the charges of love of novelties, and of opposition to it. For this, which he here says of faith, Moses says to them of the commandment, so showing that they had enjoyed at God's hand a great benefit. For there is no need to say, he means, that one must go up to heaven, or cross a great sea, and then receive the commandments, but things so great and grand hath God made of easy access to us. And what meaneth the phrase, "The Word is nigh thee?" That is, It is easy. For in thy mind and in thy tongue is thy salvation. There is no long journey to go, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For "in thy mouth and in thy heart" is the source of salvation. And then on another score also he makes the word of faith easy, and says, that "God raised Him from the dead." For just reflect upon the worthiness of the Worker, and you will no longer see any difficulty in the thing. That He is Lord then, is plain from the resurrection. And this he said at the beginning even of the Epistle. "Which was declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4.) But that the resurrection is easy too, has been shown even

to those who are very unbelieving, from the might of the Worker of it. Since then the righteousness is greater, and light and easy to receive, is it not a sign of the utmost contentiousness to leave what is light and easy, and set about impossibilities? For they could not say that it was a thing they declined as burdensome. See then how he deprives them of all excuse. For what do they deserve to have said in their defense, who choose what is burdensome and impracticable, and pass by what is light, and able to save them, and to give them those things which the Law could not give? All this can come only from a contentious spirit, which is in a state of rebellion against God. For the Law is galling, but grace is easy. The Law, though they dispute never so much, does not save; Grace yieldeth the righteousness resulting from itself, and that from the Law likewise. What plea then is to rescue them, since they are disposed to be contentious against this, but cling to that to no purpose whatever? Then, since he had made a strong assertion, he again confirms it from the Scripture.

Verse 11-13. *“For the Scripture saith, “he proceeds, “Whosoever believeth on Him, shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

You see how he produces witnesses, whether to the faith, or to the confession of it. For the words, “Every one that believeth,” point out the faith. But the words, “Whosoever shall call upon,” set forth confession. Then again to proclaim the universality of the grace, and to lay their boasting low, what he had before demonstrated at length, he here briefly recalls to their memory, showing again that there is no difference between the Jew and the uncircumcised. “For there is,” he says, “no difference between the Jew and the Greek.” And what he had said about the Father, when he was arguing this point, that he says here about the Son. For as before he said in asserting this, “Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God” (Romans 3:29, 30): - So he says here also, “For the same Lord over all is rich unto all (and upon all).” (Romans 3:22.) You see how he sets Him forth as exceedingly desiring our salvation, since He even reckons this to be riches to Himself; so that they are not even now to despair, or fancy that, provided they would repent, they were unpardonable. For He who considereth it as riches to Himself to save us, will not cease to be rich. Since even this is riches, the fact of the gift being shed forth unto all. For since what distresseth him the most was, that they, who were in the enjoyment of a prerogative over the whole world, should now by the faith be degraded from these thrones, and be no wit better off than others, he brings the Prophets in constantly as foretelling, that they would have equal honor with them. “For whosoever,” he says, “believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Isaiah 28:16); and, “Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Joel 2:32.) And the “whosoever” is put in all cases, that they might not say aught in reply. But there is nothing worse than vainglory. For it was this, this most especially, which proved their ruin. Whence Christ also said to them, “How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and seek not the glory which cometh of God only?” (John 5:44.) This, with ruin, exposes men also to much ridicule and before the punishment in the other world involves them in ills unnumbered in this. And if it seem good, that you may learn this clearly, leaving for the present the heavens which that puts us out of, and the hell which it thrusts us into, let us investigate the whole matter as here before us. What then can be more wasteful than this? what more disgraceful, or more offensive? For that this disorder is a wasteful one is plain from the people who spend to no purpose whatsoever on theatres horse-races, and other such irrelevant expenditures: from those that build the fine and expensive houses, and fit up everything in a useless style of extravagance, on which I must not enter in this discourse. But that a person diseased in this way must needs be extravagant, and expensive, and

rapacious, and covetous, anybody can see. For that he may have food to give the brute, he thrusteth his hand into the substance of others. And why do I talk of substance? It is not money only but souls also that this fire devoureth, and it worketh not death here only, but also hereafter. For vanity is the mother of hell, and greatly kindleth that fire, and the venomous worm. One may see that it hath power even over the dead. And what can be worse than this? For the other passions are put an end to by death, but this even after death shows its force, and strives to display its nature even in the dead corpse. For when men give orders on their death-bed to raise to them fine monuments, which will waste all their substance, and take pains to lay out beforehand a vast extravagance in their funeral, and in their lifetime insult the poor that come to them for a penny and a single loaf, but when they are dead give a rich banquet to the worm, why seek any more exorbitant thralldom to the disease? From this mischief also irregular loves are conceived. For there are many whom it is not the beauty of the appearance, nor the desire of lying with her, but the wish to boast that "I have made conquest of such an one," hath even drawn into adultery. And why need I mention the other mischiefs that spring of this? For I had rather be long the slave of ten thousand savages, than of vanity once. For even they do not put such commands Upon their captives, as this vice lays upon its votaries. Because it says, Be thou every one's slave, be he nobler or be he lower than thyself. Despise thy soul, neglect virtue, laugh at freedom, immolate thy salvation, and if thou doest any good thing, do it not to please God, but to display it to the many, that for these things thou mayest even lose thy crown. And if thou give alms, or if thou fast, undergo the pains, but take care to lose the gain. What can be more cruel than these commands? Hence grudging beareth sway, hence haughtiness, hence covetousness, the mother of evils. For the swarm of domestics, and the black servants liveried in gold, and the hangers on, and the flatterers, and the silver-tinseled chariots, and the other absurdities greater than these, are not had for any pleasure's sake or necessity, but for mere vanity. Yes, one will say, but that this affliction is an evil, anybody can see; but how we are to keep quite clear of it, this is what you should tell us. Well then, in the first place, if you persuade yourself that this disorder is a baneful one, you will have made a very good beginning towards correcting it. For when a man is sick, he speedily sends for the physician, if he be first made acquainted with the fact that he is sick. But if thou seekest for another way besides to escape from hence, look to God continually, and be content with glory from Him; and if thou find the passion tickling thee, and stirring thee to tell thy well-doings to thy fellow-servants, bethink thyself next, that after telling them thou gainest nothing. Quench the absurd desire, and say to thy soul, Lo, thou hast been so long big with thy own well-doings to tell them, and thou hast not had the courage to keep them to thyself, but hast blabbed them out to all. What good then hast thou gotten from this? None at all, but loss to the utmost, and avoidance of all that had been gathered together with much labor. And besides this, consider another thing also, which is, that most men's opinion is perverted, and not perverted only, but that it withers away so soon. For supposing they do admire you for the time, when the occasion has gone by they will have forgotten it all, and have taken away from thee the crown God had given, and have been unable to secure to thee that from themselves. And yet if this were abiding, it were a most miserable thing to exchange that for this. But when even this hath gone, what defense shall we be able to make for betraying the abiding one for the sake of the unabiding one, for losing such blessings for the sake of credit with a few? And indeed even if they who praise were numerous, even for this they were to be pitied, and the more so the more numerous those who do it. But if thou art surprised at what I have said, hear Christ giving His sentence in this way, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you." (Luke 6:26.) And so indeed it should seem. For if in every art you look to the workmen in it to be judges of it, how come you to trust the proving of virtue to the many, and not most of all to Him Who knoweth it more surely than any, and is best able to applaud and to crown it? This saying then, let us inscribe both

on our walls and our doors and our mind, and let us keep constantly saying to ourselves, "Woe unto us, when all men speak well of us." For even they that so speak slander one afterward as a vain person, and fond of honor, and covetous of their good word. But God doeth not so. But when He seeth thee coveting the glory that cometh of Him, then He will praise thee most, and respect thee, and proclaim thee conqueror. Not so man; but, when he finds thee slavish instead of free, by gratifying thee often by bare words with false praise, he snatches from thee thy true meed, and makes thee more of a menial than a purchased slave. For those last men get to obey them after their orders, but thou even without orders makest thyself a slave. For thou dost not even wait to hear something from them, but if thou merely knowest wherein thou mayest gratify them, even without their command thou doest all. What hell then should we not deserve, for giving the wicked pleasure, and courting their service before they give orders, while we will not hearken to God, even when He every day commands and exhorts us? And yet if thou art covetous of glory and praise, avoid the praise that cometh of men, and then thou wilt attain to glory. Turn aside from fair speeches, and then thou wilt obtain praises without number both from God and from men. For there is no one we are used to give so much glory to, as the man who looks down upon glory, or to praise and respect so much as the man who thinks scorn of getting respected and praised. And if we do so, much more will the God of the universe. And when He glorifieth thee and praiseth thee, what man can be more justly pronounced blessed? For there is not a greater difference between glory and disgrace, than between the glory from above and that of men. Or rather, there is a much greater, aye an infinite difference. For if this, even when it does not get put beside any other, is but a base and uncomely one, when we come to scrutinize it by the other's side, just consider how great its baseness will be found to be! For as a prostitute stands at her place and lets herself out to any one, so are they that be slaves of vanity. Or rather, these be more base than she. For that sort of women do in many instances treat those enamored of them with scorn. But you prostitute yourself to everybody, whether runaway slaves, or thieves, or cut-purses (for it is of these and such as these that the play-houses that applaud you consist), and those whom as individuals you hold to be nothing worth, when in a body, you honor more than your own salvation and show yourself less worthy of honor than any of them. For how can you be else than less worthy, when you stand in need of the good word of others, and fancy that you have not enough by yourself, unless you receive the glory that cometh of others? Do you not perceive, pray, beside what I have said, that as you are an object of notice, and known to every body, if you should commit a fault, you will have accusers unnumbered; but if unknown, you will remain in security? Yes, a man may say, but then if I do well I shall have admirers unnumbered. Now the fearful thing is, that it is not only when you sin, but even when you do aright, that the disorder of vanity does you mischief, in the former case subverting thousands, in the present bereaving thee entirely of thy reward. It is then a sad thing, and replete with disgrace of every kind, to be in love with glory even in civil matters. But when even in spiritual you are in the same plight what excuse is there left remaining for you, when you are not minded to yield God even as much honor as you have yourself from your servants? For even the slave "looketh to the eyes of his master" (Psalm 123:2), and the hireling to his employer, who is to pay him wages, and the disciple to his master. But you do just the contrary. Having left the God that hired thee, even thy Master, thou lookest to thy fellow-servants; and this knowing that God remembers thy well-doings even after this life, but man only for the present. And when thou hast spectators assembled in Heaven, thou art gathering together spectators upon earth. And where the wrestler struggles, there he would be honored; but thou, while thy wrestling is above, art anxious to gain thee a crown below. And what can be worse than madness like this? But let us look, if it seem proper, at the crowns also. For one is formed by haughtiness, and a second by grudging against another, and a third by dissimulation and flattery, another again by wealth, and another by servile

obsequiousness. And like as children at their childish play put crowns of grass upon one another, and many a time laugh at him that is crowned behind his back; thus now also they that pass their praises upon thee, many a time joke by themselves at their putting the grass upon us. And would it were grass only! But now the crown is laden with much mischief, and ruins all our well-doings. Taking then the vileness of it into consideration, flee from the damage entailed. For how many would you have to praise you? A hundred? or twice, or thrice, or four times as many? Or rather, if you please, put them at ten times or twenty times as many, and let there be two or four thousand, or if you will, even ten thousand to applaud you. Still these be no better than so many daws cawing from above. Or rather taking the assemblage of the angels into consideration, these will seem more vile than even worms, and their good word of not so much solidity as a cobweb, or a smoke, or a dream. Hear then how Paul, who saw through these things thoroughly, is so far from seeking after them, that he even deprecates them, in the words "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ." (Galatians 6:14.) This glory then be thou also emulous of, that thou mayest not provoke the Master, because in so doing thou art insulting God, and not thyself alone. For if thou even wert a painter, and hadst some pupil, and he were to omit showing thee his practice of the art, but set forth his painting publicly just to any body that chanted to observe it, thou wouldest not take it quietly. But if this even with thy fellow-servants were an insult, how much more with the Master! But if you have a mind to learn on other grounds to feel scorn for the thing, be of a lofty mind, laugh at appearances, increase thy love of real glory, be filled with a spiritual temper, say to thy soul as Paul did, "Knowest thou not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3) and having by this roused it up, go on to rebuke it, and say, Thou that judgest the angels, wilt thou let thyself be judged of off-scourings, and be praised with dancers, and mimics, and gladiators, and horse-drivers? For these men do follow after applause of this sort. But do thou poise thy wing high above the din of these, and emulate that citizen of the wilderness, John, and learn how he was above regarding the multitude, and did not turn him to look at flatterers, but when he saw all the dwellers in Palestine poured forth about him, and wondering, and astonished at him, he was not puffed up with such honor as this, but rose up against them, and discoursing to his great concourse as if to one youth, he thus rebuked them and said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers!" (Matthew 3:7.) Yet it was for him that they had run together, and left the cities, in order to see that holy personage, and still none of these things unnerved him. For he was far above glory, and free from all vanity. So also Stephen, when he saw the same people again, not honoring him, but mad upon him, and gnashing their teeth, being lifted above their wrath, said, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart." (Acts 7:51.) Thus also Elias, when those armies were present, and the king, and all the people, said, "How long halt ye upon both your hips?" (1 Kings 18:21, LXX) But we flatter all, court all, with this servile obsequiousness buying their honor. Wherefore all things are turned upside down, and for this favor the business of Christianity is betrayed, and everything neglected for the opinion of the generality. Let us then banish this passion, and then we shall have a right notion of liberty, and of the haven, and the calm. For the vain man is ever like persons in a storm, trembling, and fearing, and serving a thousand masters. But he that is clear of this thralldom, is like men in havens, enjoying a liberty untainted. Not so that person, but as many acquaintances as he has, so many masters has he, and he is forced to be a slave to all of them. How then are we to get free from this hard bondage? It is by growing enamored of another glory, which is really glory. For as with those that are enamored of persons, the sight of some handsomer one doth by its being seen take them off from the first: so with those that court the glory which cometh from us men, the glory from heaven, if it gleameth on them, has power to lead them off from this. Let us then look to this, and become thoroughly acquainted with it, that by feeling admiration of its beauty, we may shun

the hideousness of the other, and have the benefit of much pleasure by enjoying this continually. Which may we all attain to by the grace and love toward man, etc.

Verse 14, 15. *“How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written.”*

Here again he takes from them all excuse. For since he had said, “I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,” and that “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, they submitted not themselves” to it: he next shows, that for this ignorance itself they were punishable before God. This he does not say indeed so, but he makes it good by carrying on his discourse in the way of question, and so convicting them more clearly, by framing the whole passage out of objections and answers. But look further back. The Prophet, saith he, said, “Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” Now somebody might say perhaps, “But how could they call upon Him Whom they had not believed? Then there is a question from him after the objection; And why did they not believe? Then an objection again. A person certainly may say, And how could they believe, since they had not heard? Yet hear they did, he implies. Then another objection again. “And how could they hear without a preacher?” Then an answer again. Yet preach they did, and there were many sent forth for this very purpose. And whence does it appear that these are those persons sent? Then he brings the prophet in next, who says, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Isaiah 3:7.) You see how by the kind of preaching he points out the preachers. For there was nothing else that these men went about telling everywhere, but those unspeakable good things, and the peace made by God with men. And so by disbelieving, it is not we, he implies, whom you disbelieve, but Isaiah the prophet, who spake many years ago, that we were to be sent, and to preach, and to say what we do say. If the being saved, then, came of calling upon Him, and calling upon Him from believing, and believing from hearing, and hearing from preaching, and preaching from being sent, and if they were sent, and did preach, and the prophet went round with them to point them out, and proclaim them, and say that these were they whom they showed of so many ages ago, whose feet even they praised because of the matter of their preaching; then it is quite clear that the not believing was their own fault only. And that because God’s part had been fulfilled completely.

Verse 16, 17. *“But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (ib. 53:1.)*

Since they pressed him with another objection again to this effect, that if these were the persons sent upon the mission by God, all ought to have hearkened to them: observe Paul’s judgment, and see how he shows that this very thing which made the confusion, did in fact do away with confusion and embarrassment. What offends you, O Jew, he would say, after so great and abundant evidence, and demonstration of the points? that all did not submit to the Gospel? Why this very thing, when taken along with the others, is of force to certify thee of the truth of my statements, even in that some do not believe. For this too the prophet foretold Notice his unspeakable wisdom too; how he shows more than they were looking for, or expected him to have to say in reply. For what is it that you say? he means. Is it that all have not believed the Gospel? Well! Isaiah foretold this too from of old. Or rather, not this only, but even much more than this. For the complaint you make is Why did not all believe? But Isaiah goes further than this. For what is it he says? “Lord, who hath believed our report? Then since he had rid

himself of this embarrassment. by making the Prophet a bulwark against them, he again keeps to the line he was before upon. For as he had said that they must call upon Him, but that they who call must believe, and they who believe must hear first, but they who are to hear must have preachers, and the preachers be sent, and as he had shown that they were sent, and had preached; as he is going to bring in another objection again, taking occasion first of another quotation from the Prophet, by which he had met the objection a little back, he thus interweaves it, and connects it with what went before. For since he had produced the Prophet as saying, "Lord, who hath believed our report"? he happily seizes on the quotation, as proving what he says, "So then faith cometh by hearing". And this he makes not a mere naked statement. But as the Jews were forever seeking a sign, and the sight of the Resurrection, and were gaping after the thing much; he says, Yet the Prophet promised no such thing, but that it was by hearing that we were to believe. Hence he makes this good first, and says, "so then faith cometh by hearing." And then since this seemed a mean thing to say, see how he elevates it. For he says, I was not speaking of mere hearing, nor of the need of hearing men's words and believing them, but I mean a great sort of hearing. For the hearing is "by the word of God." They were not speaking their own, but they were telling what they learnt from God. And this is a higher thing than miracles. For we are equally bound to believe and to obey God, whether speaking or working miracles. Since both works and miracles come of His words. For both the heaven and everything else was established in this way. (Psalm 33:6-8.) After showing then that we ought to believe the prophets, who always speak God's words, and not to look after anything more, he proceeds next to the objection I mentioned, and says,

Verse 18. *"But I say, Have they not heard?"*

What, he means, if the preachers were sent, and did preach what they were bid, and these did not hear? Then comes a most perfect reply to the objection.

"Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

What do you say? he means. They have not heard? Why the whole world, and the ends of the earth, have heard. And have you, amongst whom the heralds abode such a long time, and of whose land they were, not heard? Now can this ever be? Sure if the ends of the world heard, much more must you. Then again another objection.

Verse 19. *"But I say, Did not Israel know?"*

For what if they heard, he means, but did not know what was said, nor understand that these were the persons sent? Are they not to be forgiven for their ignorance? By no means. For Isaiah had described their character in the words, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace." (Isaiah 52:7.) And before him the Lawgiver himself. Hence he proceeds.

"First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. (Deuteronomy 32:21.)

And so they ought even from him to have been able to distinguish the preachers, not from the fact of these disbelieving only, not from the fact of their preaching peace, not from the fact of their bringing the glad tidings of those good things, not from the word being sown in every part of the world, but from the

very fact of their seeing their inferiors, those of the Gentiles, in greater honor. For what they had never heard, nor their forefathers, that wisdom did these on a sudden embrace. And this was a mark of such intense honor, as should gall them, and lead them to jealousy, and to recollection of the prophecy of Moses, which said, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people." For it was not the greatness of the honor alone that was enough to throw them upon jealousy, but the fact too that a nation had come to enjoy these things which was of so little account that it could hardly be considered a nation at all. "For I will provoke you to jealousy, by them which are no nation, and by a foolish nation will I anger you." For what more foolish than the Greeks? or what of less account? See how by every means God had given from of old indications and clear signs of these times, in order to remove their blindness. For it was not any little corner in which the thing was done, but in land, and in sea, and in every quarter of the globe. And they saw those in the enjoyment of countless blessings now, who had formerly been objects of their contempt. One should consider then that this is that people of which Moses said, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you." Was it Moses only then that said this? No, for Isaiah also after Him saith so. And this is why Paul said, "First Moses," to show that a second will come who says the same things in a clearer and plainer way. As then he says above, that Esaias crieth, so too here.

Verse 20. *"But Esaias is very bold, and saith."*

Now what he means is something of this kind. He put a violence on himself, and was ambitious to speak, not some thing veiled over, but to set things even naked before your eyes, and choosing rather to run into dangers from being plain spoken, than by looking to his own safety, to leave you any shelter for your impenetrableness; although it was not the manner of prophecy to say this so clearly; but still to stop your mouths most completely, he tells the whole beforehand clearly and distinctly. The whole! what whole? Why your being cast out, and also their being brought in; speaking as follows, "I was found of them that sought Me not, I was made manifest of them that asked not after Me." (Isaiah 65:1.) Who then are they that sought not? who they that asked not after Him? Clearly not the Jews, but they of the Gentiles, who hitherto had not known Him. As then Moses gave their characteristic mark in the words, "no people" and "a foolish nation," so here also he takes the same ground to point them out from, viz. their extreme ignorance. And this was a very great blame to attach to the Jews, that they who sought Him not found Him, and they who sought Him lost Him.

Verse 21. *"But unto Israel He saith, All the day long have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." (Isaiah 65:2.)*

Observe now that difficulty, which so many I make a subject of question, is discovered laid up from of old in the words of the Prophet, and with a clear solution to it too. And what is this? You heard Paul say before. "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained unto righteousness. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness." (Romans 9:30, 31.) This Esaias also says here. For to say, "I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them which asked not after me," is the same with saying, "that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained unto righteousness." Then to show that what was happening was not of God's grace only, but also of the temper of those who came to Him, as also the casting off of the others came of the disputatiousness of those who disobeyed, hear what he proceeds with. "But to Israel He saith, All the day long have I stretched forth My hands to a

disobedient and gainsaying people;” here meaning by the day the whole period of the former dispensation. But the stretching out of the hands, means calling and drawing them to Him, and inviting them. Then to show that the fault was all their own, he says “to a disobedient and gainsaying people.” You see what a great charge this is against them! For they did not obey Him even when He invited them, but they gainsaid Him, and that when they saw Him doing so, not once or twice or thrice, but the whole period. But others who had never known Him, had the power to draw Him to them. Not that he says they themselves had the power to do it, but to take away lofty imaginings even from those of the Gentiles, and to show that it was His grace that wrought the whole, He says, I was made manifest, and I was found. It may be said, Were they then void of everything? By no means, for the taking of the things found, and the getting a knowledge of what was manifested to them, was what they contributed themselves. Then to prevent these saying, But why wast Thou not made manifest to us also? he sets down what is more than this, that I not only was made manifest, but I even continue with My hands stretched out, inviting them, and displaying all the concern of an affectionate father, and a mother that is set on her child. See how he has brought us a most lucid answer to all the difficulties before raised, by showing that it was from their own temper that ruin had befallen them, and that they are wholly undeserving of pardon. For though they had both heard and understood what was said, still not even then were they minded to come to Him. And what is far more, He did not cause them to hear these things and to understand them only, but a thing which hath more force to rouse them up and draw them to Him, when they were disobedient and gain-saying, He added to the others. Now what is this? It is His exasperating them, and making them jealous. For ye know the domineering might of the passion, and how great the power is which jealousy is naturally possessed of for bringing all disputatiousness to an end, and rousing those who have grown remiss. And why need one say this of man when in brutes without reason, and children before they are of full age, the power it shows is so great? For a child often will not submit to its father when it is called, but continues obstinate. But when another child has notice taken of it, then it even though not called comes to its father’s bosom, and what calling could not do, provoking to jealousy will. This then God also did. For He not only called and stretched out His hands, but stirred up in them the feeling of jealousy also, by bringing those far inferior to them (a thing which makes men excessively jealous) not into their good things, but (what was a much stronger step, and makes the feeling even more domineering,) into much greater good things, and of greater necessity than theirs, and such as they had never even fancied in a dream. But still they did not submit. What pardon then do they deserve who exhibit such excessive obstinacy? None. Yet this he does not say himself, but leaves it to the consciences of his hearers, to gather it from the conclusion of what he had stated, and again also confirms it by what he goes on to in his usual wisdom. And this he did also above, by introducing objections both in the case of the Law and of the people, which presented an accusation beyond the true one; and then in the answer, which was to overthrow this, yielding as much as he pleased, and as the case allowed, so as to make what he was saying not unwelcome. And this he doth here, writing as follows: “I say then, Hath God cast away His people whom He foreknew? God forbid” (Hebrews 11:1).