



COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Chapter 11

Verse 1. *"I say then, Hath God cast away His people whom He foreknew? God forbid."*

And he introduces the form a person would use in doubt, as though taking occasion from what had been said, and after making this alarming statement, by the denial of it he causes the sequel to be allowed with readiness; and what by all the former arguments he had been laboring to show that he makes good here also. What then is this? That even if there be but a few saved, the promise yet stands good. This is why he does not merely say "people," but "people which He foreknew." Then proceeding with the proof that the "people" were not cast off, "For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

I, he says, the instructor, the preacher. Now since this seemed contrary to what was said before in the words, "Who hath believed our report?" and, "All the day long have I stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people;" and, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them which are no people;" he was not satisfied with the deprecation, nor with having said, "God forbid," but makes it good by taking it up again and saying, "God hath not east away His people." But this is not a confirmation, men may say, but an assertion. Observe then the confirmation, both the first, and that which follows it. For the first is that he was himself of that race. But He would not, if on the point of casting them off, have chosen from them him to whom He entrusted all the preaching, and the affairs of the world, and all mysteries, and the whole economy. This then is one proof, but the next, after it, is his saying, that "people whom He foreknew," that is, who He knew clearly were suited to it, and would receive the faith. (See Acts 2:41; 4:4; 21:20.) For three, five, even ten thousand were believers from among them. And so to prevent any from saying, Art thou the people, then? And because thou hast been called, hath the nation been called? he proceeds.

Verse 2. *"He hath not cast off His people, whom He foreknew."*

As though he said, I have with me three, five, or ten thousand. What then? has the people come to be three, five, or ten thousand? that seed that compared with the stars of heaven for multitude, or the sand of the sea? Is this the way you deceive us and put a cheat upon us, by making the whole people thyself and the few that are with thee; and didst thou inflate us with idle hopes, and say that the promise has been fulfilled, when all are lost, and the salvation comes down to a few? This is all bombast and vanity! we cannot away with such sophistry as this Now, that they may not say this, see how in the sequel he proceeds to the answer, not giving the objection indeed, but before it grounding the answer to it upon ancient history. What then is the answer?

Verse 3-5. *"Wot ye not," he says, "what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*

What he means is nearly this. "God hath not cast off His people." For had He done so, He would have admitted none of them. But if He did admit some, He hath not cast them off. Still it is said, if He had not cast off, He would have admitted all. This does not follow; since in Elijah's time the part to be saved had come down to "seven thousand:" and now also there are probably many that believe. But if you do not know who they are, this is no wonder, for that prophet, who was so great and good a man, did not know. But God ordered things for Himself when even the prophet knew them not. But consider his judgment. Now in proving what was before him, he covertly augments the charge against them. For this is why he gave the whole passage, that he might parade before them their untowardness, and show that they had been so from of old. For if he had not wished this, but had directed his whole attention to prove that the people lay in the few, he would have said that even in Elijah's time, seven thousand were left. But now he reads to them the passage further back, as having been throughout at pains to show that it was no strange thing that they did with Christ, and the Apostles, but their habitual practice. For to prevent their saying that it was as a deceiver we put Christ to death, and as impostors that we persecute the Apostles, he brings forward the text which says, "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars." (1 Kings 19:14.) Then in order not to make his discourse galling to them, he attaches another reason to the bringing forward of the text. For he quotes it not as if it was on purpose to accuse them, but as if intent upon showing some other things. And he leaves them without any excuse even by what had before been done. For observe how strong the accusation is even from the person speaking. For it is neither Paul, nor Peter, nor James, nor John, but one whom they held in the greatest estimation, the chief of the Prophets, the friend of God, a man who had been so very zealous in their behalf as even to be given up to hunger for them, who even to this day hath never died. What then doth this man say? "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." What could be more brutal cruelty than this? For when they should have besought pardon for the offenses they had already committed., they were minded even to kill him. And all these things put them quite beyond pardon. For it was not during the prevalence of the famine, but when the season was favorable, and their shame was done away, and the devils (i.e. false gods) had been put to shame, and the power of God had been shown, and the king had bowed beneath it, that they committed these audacities, passing from murder to murder, and making away with their teachers, and such as would bring them to a better mind. What then could they have to say to this? Were they too deceivers? Were they too impostors? Did they not know whence they were either? But they distressed you. Yes, but they also told you goodly things. But what of the altars? the altars too did not surely distress you? Did they too exasperate you? See of what obstinacy, of what insolence they were ever yielding proofs! This is why in another passage too Paul says, when writing to the Thessalonians, "Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen. even as they have of the Jews, who both killed the Lord, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men (1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15); which is what he says here too, that they both digged down the altars, and killed the prophets. But what saith the answer of God unto him? "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." (1 Kings 19:18.) And what has this to do with the present subject? some may say. It hath a great deal to do with the present subject. For he shows here that it is the worthy that God useth to save even if the promise be made to the whole nation. And this he pointed out above when he said, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." And, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodoma." (Romans 9:27, 29.) And he points it out from this passage also. Wherefore he proceeds to say, "Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Observe that each word maintains its own rank, showing at once God's grace, and the obedient temper of them that receive salvation. For by saying election, he showed the approval of them, but by saying grace, he showed the gift of God.

Verse 6. *"And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."*

He again springs upon the disputatiousness of the Jews, in what has just been quoted; and on this ground bereaves them of excuse. For you cannot, he means, so much as say, that the Prophets called indeed, and God

invited, and the state of things cried aloud, and the provoking to jealousy was enough to draw us to Him, but what was enjoined was grievous, and this is why we could not draw nigh, since we had a display of works demanded of us, and laborious well-doings. For you cannot even say this. For how should God have demanded this of you, when this would just throw His grace into the shade? And this he said out of a wish to show that He was most desirous that they might be saved. (Deuteronomy 5:29.) For not only would their salvation be easily brought about, but it was also God's greatest glory to display His love toward man. Why then are you afraid of drawing nigh, since you have no works demanded of you? Why are you bickering and quarrelsome, when grace is before you, and why keep putting me the Law forward to no purpose whatsoever? For you will not be saved by that, and will mar this gift also; since if you pertinaciously insist on being saved by it, you do away with this grace of God. Then that they might not think this strange, having first taken those seven thousand; he said that they were saved by grace. For when he says, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace;" he shows that they also were saved by grace. And not hereby only, but likewise by saying, "I have reserved unto. Myself." For this is the language of One Who showeth that He Himself was the chief Contributor. And if by grace, it will be said, how came we all not to be saved? Because ye would not. For grace, though it be grace, saves the willing, not those who will not have it, and turn away from it, who persist in fighting against it, and opposing themselves to it. Observe how throughout the point he is proving is, "Not as though the Word of God had taken none effect," by showing that the worthy were those to whom the promise came, and that these, few though they be, may yet be the people of God; and indeed he had stated it in the beginning of the Epistle with much force, where he says, "For what if some did not believe" (Romans 3:3), and did not even stop at this, but proceeded, "Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar." (ib. 4.) And here again he confirms it another way, and shows the force of grace, and that always the one were being saved, the other perished. Let us then give thanks, that we belong to them that are being saved, and not having been able to save ourselves by works, were saved by the gift of God. But in giving thanks, let us not I do this in words only, but in works and actions. For this is the genuine thanksgiving, when we do those things whereby God is sure to be glorified, and flee from those from which we have been set free. For if we, after insulting the King, instead of being punished have been honored, and then go and insult Him afresh, since we are detected in the utmost ingratitude, we should with justice have to suffer the utmost punishment, one greater far than the former. For the former insolence did not show us so ungrateful as that committed after honor and much attention shown us. Let us then flee those things from which we have been set free, and not give thanks with our mouths only, lest it be said of us also, "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but with their heart is far from Me." (Isaiah 29:13.) For how is it else than unseemly, when the "heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1), and thou, for whom the heavens were made that glorify Him, doest such things that through thee the God that made thee is blasphemed? It is for this that not only he that blasphemeth, but thyself also, wilt be liable to punishment. For the heavens also do not glorify God by sending forth a voice but by putting others upon doing it at the sight of them, and yet they are said "to declare the glory of God." Thus too they that furnish a life to be wondered at, even though they hold their peace, yet glorify God, when others through them glorify Him. For He is not so much revered because of the heaven, as of a spotless life. When then we are discoursing with the Gentiles, we cite not the heavens before them, but the men, whom though they were in worse plight than brutes, He hath persuaded to be the Angels' competitors. And we stop their mouths by speaking of this change. For far better than the heaven is man, and a soul brighter than their beauty may he possess. For it, though visible for so long a time, did not persuade much. But Paul, after preaching a short time, drew the whole world unto him. For he possessed a soul no less than the heaven, which was able to draw all men unto him. Our soul is not a match even for the earth: but his is equal to the heavens. That stands indeed keeping to its own boundary and rule; but the loftiness of his soul transcended all the heavens, and conversed with Christ Himself. (2 Corinthians 10:15; Romans 15:19, etc.) And the beauty of it was so great, that even God heraldeth it forth. For the stars did the angels marvel at when they were made. (Job 38:7.) But this He marveled at when He saith, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me." (Acts 9:15.) And this Heaven doth a cloud many times overshadow But Paul's soul no temptation overshadowed but even in storms he was clearer to the sight than the hard sky at noon, and shone constantly as it had done before the clouds came on. For the Sun who shone in him sent not forth such rays as to be over-clouded by the concourse of temptations, but even then shone forth

the more. Wherefore he says, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My Strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9.) Let us then strive to be like him, and then even to what we are this heaven will be as nothing, if we wish it, nor yet the sun, nor the whole world. For these are for us, and not we for them. Let us show that we are worthy of having had these made for us. For if we be found unworthy of these, how shall we be worthy a kingdom? For indeed all that live so as to blaspheme God are unworthy to see the sun. They who blaspheme Him are unworthy to enjoy the creatures who glorify Him: since even a son who insulteth his father is unworthy to be waited upon by the approved servants. Hence these will enjoy glory, and that great glory; but we shall have to undergo punishment and vengeance. How miserable then will it be for the creation which was made for thee to be fashioned "according to the glorious liberty of the children of God," (Romans 8:21) but for us who were made children of God, through our much listlessness, to be sent away to destruction and hell, for whose sake the creation shall enjoy that great festal time? Now to keep this from coming to pass, let such of us as have a pure soul keep it still such, or rather let us make its brightness more intense. And let those of us that have a soiled one, not despair. For "if" (he says) "your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow. And if they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool." (Isaiah 1:18.) But when it is God that promiseth, doubt not, but do those things whereby thou mayest draw to thee these promises. Are they unnumbered, the fearful and outrageous acts done by thee? And what of this? For hitherto thou art not gone away into the grave where no man shall confess. (ib. 38:18; Psalm 6:5.) Hitherto the arena is not broken up for thee, but thou art standing within the line, and thou art able even by a struggle at the last to recover all thy defeats. Thou art not yet come to where the rich man was, for thee to hear it said, "there is a gulf betwixt you and us." (Luke 16:26.) The Bridegroom is not yet at hand, that one should fear to give you of his oil. Still canst thou buy and store up. And there is not one yet to say, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you" (Matthew 25:9); but there are many that sell, the naked, the hungry, the sick, the imprisoned. Give food to these, clothing to those, visit the sick, and the oil will come more than from fountains. The day of account is not here. Use the time as need be, and make deductions from the debts, and to him that oweth "an hundred measures of oil, say, Take thy bill and write fifty." (Luke 16:6.) And with money, and with words) and with every other thing do in like manner, imitating that steward. And advise this to thyself, and also to thy relatives, for thou hast still the power of saying so. Thou art not yet come to the necessity of calling in another in their behalf, but thou hast power to give advice at once to thyself and to others. (ib. 28.) But when thou art gone away thither, neither of these things wilt thou have it in thy power to do at need. And with good reason. For thou who hast had so long a period fixed thee, and neither done thyself good, nor any else, how when thou art under the Judge's hands shall thou be able to obtain this grace? Putting all these things together then, let us cling fast to our own salvation, and not lose the opportunity of this life present. For it is possible, it is, even at our last breath to please God. It is possible to gain approval by thy last will, not indeed in such way as in our lifetime, still it is possible. How, and in what way? If thou leavest Him among thine heirs, and givest Him also a portion of thine whole estate. Hast thou not fed Him in thy lifetime? At all events when departed, when thou art no longer owner, give Him a share of thy goods. He is loving unto man, He doth not deal niggardly by thee. It is a mark to be sure of a greater desire, and so it will be more rewarded, to feed Him in thy lifetime. But if thou hast not done this, at all events do the next best thing. Leave Him joint-heir with thy children, and if thou art dilatory over this, bethink thyself that His Father made thee joint-heir with Him, and break down thy inhuman spirit. For what excuse wilt thou have if thou dost not even make Him a sharer with thy children, who made thee share the Heaven, and was slain for thee? And yet all that ever He did, He did not in repayment of a debt, but as bestowing a favor. But you after so great benefits, have been made a debtor as well. And yet, though things are so, it is as if receiving a favor, not as demanding payment of a debt, that He crowneth thee; and this too when what He is to receive is His own. Give then thy money, which is now no longer of any use to thee, and of which thou art no longer owner and He will give thee a Kingdom which shall be of service to thee perpetually, and with it will bestow also the things of this life. For if He be made the joint-heir of thy children, He doth lighten their orphanage for them, do away with plots against them, beat off insults, stop the mouths of pettifoggers. And if they themselves be unable to stand up for their bequeathments, He will Himself stand up; and not let them be broken through. But if He do even allow this, then He makes up of Himself all that was ordered in the will with still greater liberality, because He has been but mentioned in it. Leave Him then thine heir. For it is to Him that thou art upon the point

of going. He will be thy Judge Himself in the trial for all that hath been done here. But there are some so miserable and pinched, that though they have no children, still they have not the courage to do this, but approve of giving that they have to hangers on, and to flatterers, and to this person and to that, sooner than to Christ, Who hath done them so great benefits. And what can be more unreasonable than this conduct? For if one were to compare men of this east to asses, aye, or to stones, one shall not still be saying anything tantamount to their unreasonableness and senselessness. Nor could one find a similitude to put before you their madness and dementedness. For what pardon shall they obtain for not having fed Him in their lifetime, who, even when they are on the point of departing to Him, have not the inclination to give Him but a trifle out of those goods, of which they are no longer the owners, but are of such an inimical and hostile disposition, as not even to give Him a share in what is useless to themselves? Do you not know how many of mankind have not even been counted worthy to obtain an end of this kind, but have been snatched off suddenly? But thee doth God empower to give orders to thy kindred, and to speak with them about thy property, and set all that is in thy house in order. What defense then wilt thou have to set up, when even after receiving this favor from Him, thou hast treacherously given up the benefit, and art standing as it were in diametrical opposition to thy forefathers in the faith? For they even in their lifetime sold all, and brought it to the Apostle's feet. But thou, even at thy death, dost not give any share to them that need. What is the better part, and gives one much boldness, is to remedy poverty in one's lifetime. But if thou hast not been minded to do this, at all events do upon thy death-bed some noble act. For this is not what a strong love for Christ would do, yet still it is an act of love. For if thou wilt not have the high place with the Lambs, still even to be after them at all is no light thing, and so not to be placed with the goats nor on the left hand. But if thou wilt not do even this, what plea is to rescue thee, when neither the fear of death nor thy money having become henceforth of no use to thee, nor the leaving of safety behind thee to thy children, nor the laying up of much pardon there against the time to come, will make thee merciful to man? Wherefore I advise, as the best thing, that in your lifetime you give the larger half of your goods to the poor. But if there be any of so narrow a soul as not to have the heart to do so, at all events let them by necessity become merciful. For when you were living as if there were no death, then you clung close to your goods. But now since you have learnt that you are to die, at least now give over your opinion, and deliberate about your affairs as one that must die. Or rather as one that ought to enjoy immortal life for evermore. For if what I am going to say be distasteful, and big with horror, still it must be said. Reckon with thy slaves the Lord. Art thou giving thy slaves liberty? Give Christ liberty from famine, from distress, from imprisonment, from nakedness. Art thou horrified at the words? Is it not then more horrible when thou dost not even thus much? And here the word makes thy blood curdle. But when thou art gone to that world, and hast to hear things far more grievous than these, and seest the tortures which are incurable, what wilt thou say? To whom wilt thou flee for refuge? Whom wilt thou call to thy alliance and assistance? Will it be Abraham? He will not hearken to thee. Or those virgins? They will not give thee of their oil. Thy father then or thy grandfather? But none even of these, if he be ever so holy, will have it in his power to reverse that sentence. Weighing then all these things, to Him Who alone is Lord to blot out the bill against thee and to quench that flame, to Him make prayer and supplication, and propitiate Him, by now feeding Him and clothing Him continually: that in this world thou mayest depart with a good hope, and when thou art there thou mayest enjoy eternal blessings, which may we all attain to by the grace and love toward man, etc.

Verse 7. *“What then? Israel hath not obtained that, which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded.”*

He had said that God did not cast off His people; and to show in what sense He had not cast them off, he takes refuge in the Prophets again. And having shown by them that the more part of the Jews were lost, that he might not seem to be again bringing forward an accusation of his own, and to make his discourse offensive, and to be attacking them as enemies, he takes refuge in David and Isaiah, and says,

Verse 8. *“According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber.” (Isaiah 29:10.)*

Or rather we should go back to the beginning of his argument. Having then mentioned the state of things in Elijah's time, and shown what grace is, he proceeds, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." Now this is as much what an accuser would say, as what one who was putting a question. For the Jew, he means, is inconsistent with himself when he seeketh for righteousness, which he will not accept. Then to leave them with no excuse, he shows, from those who have accepted it, their unfeeling spirit, as he says, "But the election hath obtained it," and they are the condemnation of the others. And this is what Christ says, "But if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Wherefore they shall be your judges." (Luke 11:19.) For to prevent any one from accusing the nature of the thing, and not their own temper, he points out those who had obtained it. Hence he uses the word with great propriety, to show at once the grace from above and the zeal of these. For it is not to deny free-will that he speaks of their having "obtained" it, but to show the greatness of the good things, and that the greater part was of grace, though not the whole? For we too are in the habit of saying, "so and so chanted to get", "so and so met with," when the gain has been a great one. Because it is not by man's labors, but by God's gift, that the greater part was brought about. "And the rest was blinded."

See how he has been bold enough to tell with his own voice the casting off of the rest. For he had indeed spoken of it already, but it was by bringing the prophets in as accusers. But from this point he declares it in his own person. Still even here he is not content with his own declaration, but brings Isaiah the prophet in again. For after saying, "were blinded," he proceeds; according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber." Now whence came this blinding? He had indeed mentioned the causes of it before, and turned it all upon their own heads, to show that it was from their unseasonable obstinacy that they had to bear this. And now he speaks of it too. For when he says, "Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear," he is but finding fault with their contentious spirit. For when they had "eyes to see" the miracles, and were possessed of "ears to hear" that marvelous Teaching, they never used these as were fitting. And the "He gave," do not imagine to mean here an agency, but a permission only. But. "slumber" is a name he here gives to the habit of soul inclinable to the worse, when incurably and unchangeably so. For in another passage David says, "that my glory may sing unto Thee, and I may not be put to slumber" (Psalm 30:12, LXX.): that is, I may not alter, may not be changed. For as a man who is hushed to slumber in a state of pious fear would not easily be made to change his side; so too he that is slumbering in wickedness would not change with facility. For to be hushed to slumber here is nothing else but to be fixed and riveted to a thing. In pointing then to the incurable and unchangeable character of their spirit, he calls it "a spirit of slumber." Then to show that for this unbelief they will be most severely punished, he brings the Prophet forward again, threatening the very things which in the event came to pass.

Verse 9. *"Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block." (Psalm 69:22, 23.)*

That is, let their comforts and all their good things change and perish, and let them be open to attack from any one. And to show that this is in punishment for sins that they suffer this, he adds, "and a recompense unto them."

Verse 10. *"Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow Thou down their back away."*

Do these things then still require any interpreting? Are they not plain even to those ever so senseless? And before our words, the very issue of facts has anticipated us in bearing witness to what was said. For at what time have they ever been so open to attacks? at what time such an easy prey? at what time hath He so "bowed down their backs?" At what time have they been set under such bondage? And what is more, there is not to be any unloosing from these terrors. And this the prophet hath also hinted. For he does not say only, "bow Thou down their back," but, "forever bow Thou down." But if thou art disposed to dispute, O Jew, about the issue, from what hath gone before learn also the present case. Thou didst go down to Egypt; and two hundred years passed, and God freed thee speedily from that bondage, and that though thou wert irreligious, and wentest a whoring with the most baneful whoredom. Thou wast freed from Egypt, and thou didst worship the calf, thou didst sacrifice thy sons to Baalpeor, thou didst defile the temple, thou didst go after every sort of vice, thou didst grow not to know nature

itself. The mountains, the groves, the hills, the springs, the rivers, the gardens didst thou fill with accursed sacrifices, thou didst slay the prophets, didst overthrow the altars, didst exhibit every excess of wickedness and irreligion. Still, after giving thee up for seventy years to the Babylonians, He brought thee back again to thy former freedom, and gave thee back the temple, and thy country, and thy old form of polity and there were prophets again, and the gift of the Spirit. Or rather, even in the season of thy captivity thou wast not deserted, but even there were Daniel, and Ezekiel, and in Egypt Jeremiah, and in the desert Moses. After this thou didst revert to thy former vice again, and wast a reveler (2 Macc. 14:33), therein, and didst change thy manner of life (Daniel 8:14; 1 Macc. 4:54). But even then for a three years and a little over only were ye given up to Antiochus, and then by the Maccabees ye raised those bright trophies again. But now there is nothing of the sort, for the reverse hath happened throughout. And this is ground for the greatest surprise, as the vices have ceased, and the punishment hath been increased, and is without any hope of a change. For it is not seventy years only that have passed away, nor a hundred, nor yet twice as many but three hundred, and a good deal over, and there is no finding even a shadow of a hope of the kind. And this though ye neither are idolaters, nor do the other audacious acts ye did before. What then is the cause? The reality hath succeeded to the type, and grace hath shut out the Law. And this the prophet foretelling from of old said, "And ever bow Thou down their back." See the minuteness of prophecy, how it foretells their unbelief, and also points out their disputatiousness, and shows the judgment which should follow, and sets forth the endlessness of the punishment. For as many of the duller sort, through unbelief in what was to come to pass, wished to see things to come by the light of things present, from this point of time God gave proof of His power on either part, by lifting those of the Gentiles who believed. above the heaven, but bringing down such of the Jews as believed not to the lowest estate of desolation, and giving them up to evils not to be ended. Having then urged them severely both about their not believing, and about what they had suffered and were yet to suffer, he again allays what he had said by writing as follows:

Verse 11. *"I say then, Have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid."*

When he has shown that they were liable to evils without number, then he devises an allayment. And consider the judgment of Paul. The accusation he had introduced from the prophets, but the allayment he makes come from himself. For that they had sinned greatly, he would say, none will gainsay. But let us see if the fall is of such kind as to be incurable, and quite preclude their being set up again. But of such kind it is not. You see how he is attacking them again, and under the expectation of some allayment he proves them guilty of confessed sins. But let us see what even by way of allayment he does devise for them. Now what is the allayment? "When the fullness of the Gentiles," he says, "shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved," at the time of his second coming', and the end of the world. Yet this he does not say at once. But since he had made a hard onset upon them, and linked accusations to accusations, bringing prophets in after prophets crying aloud against them, Isaiah, Elijah, David, Moses, Hosea, not once or twice, but several times; lest in this way he should both by driving these into despair, make a wall to bar their access to the faith, and should further make such of the Gentiles as believed unreasonably elated, and they also by being puffed up should take harm in matter of their faith, he further solaces them by saying, "But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." But we must not take what is here said literally, but get acquainted with the spirit and object of the speaker, and what he aimed to compass. Which thing I ever entreat of your love. For if with this in our minds we take up what is here said, we shall not find a difficulty in any part of it. For his present anxiety is to remove from those of the Gentiles the haughtiness which might spring in them from what he had said. For in this way they too were more likely to continue unshaken in the faith, when they had learnt to be reasonable, as also those of the Jews were, when quit of despair, more likely to come with readiness to grace. Having regard then to this object of his, let us so listen to all that is said on this. passage. What does he say then? And whence does he show that their fall was not irremediable, nor their rejection final? He argues from the Gentiles, saying as follows:

"Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

This language is not his own only, but in the Gospels too the parables mean this. For He who made a marriage feast for His Son, when the guests would not come, called those in the highways. (Matthew 22:9.) And He who planted the Vineyard, when the husbandmen slew the Heir, let out His Vineyard to others. (ib. 21:38, etc.) And without any parable, He Himself said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (ib. 15:24.) And to the Syrophenician woman, when she persevered, He said somewhat further besides. "It is not meet," He says, "to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." (ib. 15:26.) And Paul to those of the Jews that raised a sedition, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46.) And throughout it is clear that the natural course of things was this, that they should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved, the order was reversed; and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. Hence it is that he says, "through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." But if he mentions what the course of things issued in, as if the chief design of Providence, do not feel surprised. For he wishes to soothe their down-stricken souls, and his meaning is about this. Jesus came to them; they did not receive Him, though He did countless miracles, but crucified Him. Hence He drew the Gentiles to Him, that the honor they had, by cutting them to the heart for their insensibility might at least out of a moroseness against others persuade them to come over. For they ought to have been first admitted, and then we. And this was why he said, "For it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." (Romans 1:16.) But as they had started off, we the last became first. See then how great honors he gathers for them even from this. One that he says, we were then called, when they were not willing; a second that he says, the reason of our being called was not that we only might be saved, but that they also, growing jealous at our salvation, might become better. What does he say then? that if it were not for the Jews' sake, we should not have been called and saved at all? We should not before them, but in the regular order. Wherefore also when He was speaking to the disciples, He did not say barely, "Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matthew 10:6), but, "Go rather to the sheep," to show that to those parts also they must come after these. And Paul again saith not, "It was necessary that the word of God should have been spoken unto you," but "should first have been spoken unto you" (Acts 13:46), to show that in the second place it must be to us also. And this was both done and said, that they might not be able, shameless though they were, to pretend that they were overlooked, and that was why they did not believe. This then was why Christ, though he knew all things before, yet came to them first.

Verse 12. *"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?"*

Here he is speaking to gratify them. For even if these had fallen a thousand times, the Gentiles would not have been saved unless they had shown faith. As the Jews likewise would not have perished unless they had been unbelieving and disputatious. But as I said, he is solacing them now they are laid low, giving them so much the more ground to be confident of their salvation if they altered. For if when they stumbled, he says, so many enjoyed salvation, and when they were cast out so many were called, just consider what will be the case when they return. But he does not put it thus, When they return. Now he does not say "how much more their" return, or their altering, or their well-doing, but "how much more their fullness," that is, when they are all about coming in. And this he said to show that then also grace and God's gift will do the larger part, or almost the whole.

Verse 13, 14. *"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."*

Again he endeavors much to get himself clear of untoward suspicion. And he seems to be blaming the Gentiles, and to be humbling their conceits, yet he gives a gentle provocation to the Jew also. And indeed he goes round about seeking to veil and allay this great ruin of theirs. But he finds no means of doing it, owing to the nature of the facts. For from what he had said, they deserved but the greater condemnation, when those who were far short of them had taken the good things prepared for them. This is why then he passes from the Jews to those of

the Gentiles, and puts in between his discourse the part about them, as wishing to show that he is saying all these things in order to instruct them to be reasonable. For I praise you, he means, for these two reasons one, because I am necessitated to do so as being your commissioned minister; the other that through you I may save others. And he does not say, my brethren, my kinsmen; but, "my flesh." And next, when pointing out their disputations spirit, he does not say, "if by any means I may" persuade, but, "provoke to jealousy and save;" and here again not all, but, "some of them." So hard were they! And even amid his rebuke he shows again the Gentiles honored, for they are causes of their salvation, and not in the same way. For they became purveyors of blessings to them through unbelief, but these to the Jews by faith. Hence the estate of the Gentiles seems to be at once equal and superior. For what wilt thou say, O Jew? that if we had not been east out, he would not have been called so soon? This the man of the Gentiles may say too, If I had not been saved, thou wouldest not have been moved to jealousy. But if thou wouldest know wherein we have the advantage, I save thee by believing, but it is by stumbling that thou hast afforded us an access before thyself. Then perceiving again that he had touched them to the quick, resuming his former argument, he says,

Verse 15. *"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"*

Yet this again condemns them, since, while others gained by their sins, they did not profit by other men's well doings. But if he asserts that to be their doing which necessarily happened, be not surprised: since (as I have said several times) it is to humble these, and to exhort the other, that he throws his address into this form. For as I said before, if the Jews had been cast away a thousand times over, and the Gentiles had not shown faith, they would never have been saved. But he stands by the feeble party, and gives assistance to the distressed one. But see also even in his favors to them, how he solaces them in words only. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world," (and what is this to the Jews?) "what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Yet even this was no boon to them, unless they had been received. But what he means is to this effect. If in anger with them He gave other men so great gifts, when He is reconciled to them what will He not give? But as the resurrection of the dead was not by the receiving of them, so neither now is our salvation through them. But they were cast out owing to their own folly, but it is by faith that we are saved, and by grace from above. But of all this nothing can be of service to them, unless they show the requisite faith. Yet doing as he is wont, he goes on to another encomium, which is not really one, but which only seems to be, so imitating the wisest physicians, who give their patients as much consolation as the nature of the sickness allows them. And what is it that he says?

Verse 16. *"For if the first-fruits be holy, the lump also is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches;"*

So calling in this passage by the names of the first-fruit and root Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the prophets, the patriarchs, all who were of note in the Old Testament; and the branches, those from them who believed. Then since the fact met him that many had disbelieved, observe how he undermines it again, and says,

Verse 17. *"And if some of the branches be broken off."*

And yet above thou didst say that the more part perished, and a few were saved only. How came it then that speaking of those that perished, thou hast used a "some," which is indicative of fewness? It is not, he replies, in opposition to myself, but out of a desire to court and recover those that are distressed. Observe how in the whole of the passage one finds him working at this object, the wish to solace them. And if you deny it, many contradictions will follow. But let me beg you to notice his wisdom, how while he seems to be speaking for them, and devising a solace for them, he aims a secret blow at them, and shows that they are devoid of all excuse, even from the "root," from the "first-fruit." For consider the badness of the branches, which, when they have a sweet root, still do not imitate it; and the faultiness of the lump, when it is not altered even by the first-fruit. "And if some of the branches were broken off." However, the greater part were broken off. Yet, as I said, he wishes to

comfort them. And this is why it is not in his own person, but in theirs, that he brings in the words used, and even in this gives a secret stroke at them, and shows them to have fallen from being Abraham's kinsmen. (Matthew 3:9.) For what he was desirous of saying was, that they had nothing in common with them. (John 8:39.) For if the root be holy, and these be not holy, then these are far away from the root. Then under the appearance of solacing the Jews, he again by his accusation smiteth them of the Gentiles. For after saying, "And if some of the branches were broken off," he proceeds.

"And thou being a wild olive wert grafted in."

For the less esteem the man of the Gentiles is of, the more the Jew is vexed at seeing him enjoy his goods. And to the other, the disgrace of the little esteem he was of, is nothing to the honor of the change. And consider his skillfulness. He does not say, "thou wert" planted "in," but "thou wert grafted in," by this again cutting the Jew to the heart, as showing that the Gentile man was standing in his own tree, and himself lying on the ground. Wherefore he does not stop even here, nor after he had spoken of grafting in does he leave off (and yet in this he declared the whole matter), but still he dwells over the prosperous state of the Gentile, and enlarges upon his fair fame in the words, "And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." And he seems indeed to have viewed him in the light of an addition. But he shows that he was no whir the worse on that account, but in possession of everything, that the branch which had come up out of the root had. Lest then on hearing the words, "and thou wert grafted in," thou shouldst suppose him to be lacking when compared with the natural branch, see how he makes him equal to it by saying, that "with them thou partakest of the root and fatness of the olive:" that is, hast been put into the same noble rank, the same nature. Then in rebuking him, and saying,

Verse 18. *"Boast not against the branches."*

He seems indeed to be comforting the Jew, but points out his vileness and extreme dishonor. And this is why he says not, "boast not," but, "boast not against" do not boast against them so as to sunder them. For it is into their place that ye have been set, and their goods that ye enjoy. Do you observe how he seems to be rebuking the one, while he is sharp upon the other?

"But if thou boast," he says, "thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."

Now what is this to the branches that are cut off? Nothing. For, as I said before, while seeming to devise a sort of weak shadow of consolation, and in the very midst of his aiming at the Gentile, he gives them a mortal blow; for by saying, "boast not against them," and, "if thou boast, thou bearest not the root," he has shown the Jew that the things done deserved boasting of, even if it was not right to boast, thus at once rousing him and provoking him to faith, and smiting at him, in the attitude of an advocate, and pointing out to him the punishment he was undergoing, and that other men had possession of what were their goods.

Verse 19. *"Thou wilt say then," he goes on, "The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."*

Again he establishes, by way of objection, the opposite to the former position, to show that what he said before, he had not said as directly belonging to the subject, but to draw them to him. For it was no longer by their fall that salvation came to the Gentiles, nor was it their fall that was the riches of the world. Nor was it by this that we were saved, because they had fallen, but the reverse. And he shows that the providence in regard to the Gentiles was a main object, even though he seems to put what he says into another forth. And the whole passage is a tissue of objections, in which he clears himself of the suspicion of hatred, and makes his language such as will be acceptable.

Verse 20. *“Well,” he praises what they said, then he alarms them again by saying, “Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou art grafted in by faith.”*

So here another encomium, and for the other party an accusation. But he again lays their pride low by proceeding to say, “be not high-minded, but fear.” For the thing is not matter of nature, but of belief and unbelief. And he seems to be again bridling the Gentile, but he is teaching the Jew that it is not right to cling to a natural kinsmanship. Hence he goes on with, “Be not high-minded,” and he does not say, but be humble, but, fear. For haughtiness genders a contempt and listlessness. Then as he is going into all the sorrows of their calamity, in order to make the statement less offensive, he states it in the way of a rebuke given to the other as follows:

Verse 21. *“For if God spared not the natural branches,”*

and then he does not say, neither will He spare thee,” but “take heed, lest He also spare not thee.” So paring away the distasteful from his statement, representing the believer as in the struggle, he at once draws the others to him, and humbles these also.

Verse 22. *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”*

And he does not say, Behold thy well doing, behold thy labors, but, “Behold the goodness of God” toward man, to show that the whole comes of grace from above, and to make us tremble. For this reason for boasting should make thee to fear: since the Lord hath been good unto thee, do thou therefore fear. For the blessings do not abide by thee unmovable if thou turnest listless, as neither do the evils with them, if they alter; “For thou also,” he says, “unless thou continue in the faith, wilt be cut off.”

Verse 23. *“And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in.”*

For it was not God that cut them off but they have broken themselves off and fallen, and he did well to say have broken themselves off. For He hath never yet so cast them off, though they have sinned so much and so often. You see what a great thing a man’s free choice is, how great the efficacy of the mind is. For none of these things is immutable, neither thy good nor his evil. You see too how he raises up even him in his despondency, and humbles the other in his confidence; and do not thou be faint at hearing of severity, nor thou be confident at hearing of goodness. The reason why He cut thee off in severity was, that thou mightest long to come back. The reason why He showed goodness to thee was, that thou mightest continue in (he does not say the faith, but) His goodness, that is, if thou do things worthy of God’s love toward man. For there is need of something more than faith. You see how he suffers, neither these to lie low, nor those to be elated, but he also provokes them to jealousy, by giving through them a power to the Jew to be set again in this one’s place, as he also had first taken the other’s ground. And the Gentile he put in fear by the Jews, and what had happened to them, lest they should feel elated over it. But the Jew he tries to encourage by what had been afforded to the Greek. For thou also, he says, wilt be cut off if thou growest listless, (for the Jew was cut off), and he will be grafted in if he be earnest, for thou also wast grafted in. But it is very judicious in him to direct all he says to the Gentile, as he is always in the habit of doing, correcting the feeble by rebuking the stronger. This he does in the end of this Epistle too, when he is speaking of the observance of meats. Then, he grounds this on what had already happened, not upon what was to come only. And this was more likely to persuade his hearer. And as he means to enter on consecutiveness of reasonings, such as could not be spoken against, he first uses a demonstration drawn from the power of God. For if they were cut off, and cast aside, and others took precedence of them in what was theirs, still even now despair not.

“For God is able,” he says, “to graft them in again,” since He doeth things beyond expectation. But if thou wishest for things to be in order, and reasons to be consecutive, you have from yourselves a demonstration which more than meets your wants.

Verse 24. *“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree.”*

If then faith was able to do what was contrary to nature, much more will it that which is according to nature. For if this person, who was cut off from those by nature his fathers, came contrary to nature unto Abraham, much more wilt thou be able to recover thine own. For the Gentile’s evil lot is according to nature (he being by nature a wild olive), and the good contrary to nature (it being contrary to nature for him to be grafted into Abraham), but thy lot on the contrary is the good by nature. For it is not upon another root, as the Gentile, but on thine own that thou art to be fixed if thou art minded to come back. What then dost thou deserve, when after the Gentile had been able to do what was contrary to nature, thou art not able to do that which is according to nature, but hast given up even this? Then as he had said “contrary to nature,” and, “wert grafted in,” that you may not suppose the Jew to have the advantage, he again corrects this by saying that he also is grafted in. “How much more shall these,” says he, “which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree?” And again, “God is able to graft them in.” And before this he says, that if they “abide not still in unbelief, they shall be also grafted in.” And when you hear that he keeps speaking of “according to nature,” and “contrary to nature,” do not suppose that he means the nature that is unchangeable, but he tells us in these words of the probable and the consecutive, and on the other hand of the improbable. For the good things and the bad are not such as are by nature, but by temper and determination alone. And consider also how inoffensive he is. For after saying that thou also wilt be cut off, if thou dost not abide in the faith, and these will be grafted in, if they “abide not still in unbelief,” he leaves that of harsh aspect, and insists on that of kindlier sound, and in it he ends, putting great hopes before the Jews if they were minded not to abide so. Wherefore he goes on to say,

Verse 25. *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.”*

Meaning by mystery here, that which is unknown and unutterable, and hath much of wonder and much of what one should not expect about it. As in another passage too he says, “Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51.) What then is the mystery?

“That blindness in part hath happened unto Israel.” Here again he levels a blow at the Jew, while seeming to take down the Gentile. But his meaning is nearly this, and he had said it before, that the unbelief is not universal, but only “in part.” As when he says, “But if any hath caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part” (2 Corinthians 2:5): And, so here too he says what he had said above, “God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew” (Romans 11:2): and again, “What then? Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid” (ib. 11): This then he says here also; that it is not the whole people that is pulled up, but many have already believed, and more are likely to believe. Then as he had promised a great thing, he adduces the prophet in evidence, speaking as follows. Now it is not for the fact of a blindness having happened that he quotes the passage (for every one could see that), but that they shall believe and be saved, he brings Isaiah to witness, who crieth aloud and saith,

Verse 26. *“There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Isaiah 59:20.)*

Then to give the mark that fixes its sense to salvation, to prevent any one from drawing it aside and attaching it to times gone by, he says,

Verse 27. *“For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”*

Not when they are circumcised, not when they sacrifice, not when they do the other deeds of the Law, but when they attain to the forgiveness of sins. If then this hath been promised, but has never yet happened in their case, nor have they ever enjoyed the remission of sins by baptism, certainly it will come to pass. Hence he proceeds,

Verse 29. *“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”*

And even this is not all he says to solace them, for he uses what had already come about. And what came in of consequence, that he states as chiefly intended, putting it in these words,

Verse 28. *“As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”*

That the Gentile then might not be puffed up, and say, “I am standing, do not tell me of what would have been, but what has been,” he uses this consideration to bring him down, and says, “As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes.” For when you were called they became more captious. Nevertheless God hath not even now cut short the calling of you, but He waiteth for all the Gentiles that are to believe to come in, and then they also shall come. Then he does them another kind favor, by saying, “As touching election, they are beloved for the fathers sakes.” And what is this? for wherein they are enemies, punishment is theirs: but wherein they are beloved, the virtue of their ancestors has no influence on them, if they do not believe. Nevertheless, as I said, he ceaseth not to solace them with words, that he may bring them over. Wherefore by way of fresh proof for his former assertion, he says,

Verse 30-32. *“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they may also obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.”*

He shows here that those of the Gentiles were called first. Then, as they would not come, the Jews were elected, and the same result occurred again. For when the Jews would not believe, again the Gentiles were brought over. And he does not stop here, nor does he draw the whole to a conclusion at their rejection, but at their having mercy shown them again. See how much he gives to those of the Gentiles, as much as he did to the Jews before. For when ye, he would say, “in times past did not obey,” being of the Gentiles, then the Jews came in. Again, when these did not obey, ye have come. However, they will not perish forever. “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,” that is, hath convinced them, hath shown them disobedient; not that they may remain in disobedience, but that He may save the one by the captiousness of the other, these by those and those by these. Now consider; ye were disobedient, and they were saved. Again, they have been disobedient, and ye have been saved. Yet ye have not been so saved as to be put away again, as the Jews were, but so as to draw them over through jealousy while ye abide.

Verse 33. *“Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments!”*

Here after going back to former times, and looking back to God’s original dispensation of things whereby the world hath existed up to the present time, and having considered what special provision He had made for all occurrences, he is stricken with awe, and cries aloud, so making his hearers feel confident that certainly that will come to pass which he saith. For he would not have cried aloud and been awe-struck, unless this was quite sure to come to pass. That it is a depth then, he knows: but how great, he knows not. For the language is that of a person wondering, not of one that knew the whole. But admiring and being awe-struck at the goodness, so far

forth as in him lay, he heralds it forth by two intensitive words, riches and depth, and then is awestruck at His having had both the will and the power to do all this, and by opposites effecting opposites. "How unsearchable are His judgments." For they are not only impossible to be comprehended, but even to be searched. "And His ways past finding out;" that is, His dispensations for these also are not only impossible to be known, but even to be sought into. For even I, he means, have not found out the whole, but a little part, not all. For He alone knoweth His own clearly. Wherefore he proceeds:

Verse 34, 35. *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"*

What he means is nearly this: that though He is so wise, yet He has not His Wisdom from any other, but is Himself the Fountain of good things. And though He hath done so great things, and made us so great presents, yet it was not by borrowing from any other that He gave them, but by making them spring forth from Himself; nor as owing any a return for having received from him, but as always being Himself the first to do the benefits; for this is a chief mark of riches, to overflow abundantly, and yet need no aid. Wherefore he proceeds to say, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." Himself devised, Himself created, Himself worketh together. For He is rich, and needeth not to receive from another. And wise, and needeth no counselor. Why speak I of a counselor? To know the things of Him is no one able, save Himself alone, the Rich and Wise One. For it is proof of much riches that He should make them of the Gentiles thus well supplied; and of much wisdom that He should constitute the inferiors of the Jews their teachers. Then as he was awe-struck he offers up thanksgiving also in the word, "To Whom be glory forever. Amen.

For when he tells of any great and unutterable thing of this kind, he ends in wonder with a doxology. And this he does in regard to the Son also. For in that passage also he went on to the very same thing that he does here. "Of whom is Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all God blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 9:5.)

Him then let us also imitate, and let us glorify God in all things, by a heedful way of life, and let us not feel confidence in the virtues of our ancestry, knowing the example that has been made of the Jews. For this is not, certainly it is not, the relationship of Christians, for theirs is the kinsmanship of the Spirit. So the Scythian becometh Abraham's son: and his son on the other hand more of an alien to him than the Scythian. Let us not then feel confidence in the well-doings of our fathers, but if you have a parent who is a marvel even, fancy not that this will be enough to save you, or to get you honor and glory, unless you have the relationship of character to him. So too if you have a bad one, do not think that you will be condemned on this account, or be put to shame if at least you order your own doings aright. For what can be less honorable than the Gentiles? still in faith they soon became related to the Saints. Or what more nearly connected than the Jews? Yet still by unbelief they were made aliens. For that relationship is of nature and necessity, after which we are all relations. For of Adam we all sprung, and none can be more a relation than another, both as regards Adam and as regards Noah, and as regards the earth, the common mother of all. But the relationship worthy of honors, is that which does distinguish us from the wicked. For it is not possible for all to be relations in this way, but those of the same character only. Nor do we call them brothers who come of the same labor with ourselves, but those who display the same zeal. In this way Christ giveth men the name of children of God, and so on the other hand children of the devil, and so too children of disobedience, of hell, and of perdition likewise. So Timothy was Paul's son from goodness and was called "mine own son" (1 Timothy 1:2): but of his sister's son we do not know even the name. And yet the one was by nature related to him, and still that availed him not. But the other being both by nature and country far removed from him (as being a native of Lystra), still became most nearly related. Let us then also become the sons of the Saints, or rather let us become even God's sons. For that it is possible to become sons of God, hear what he says, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 5:48.) This is why we call Him Father in prayer, and that not only to remind ourselves of the grace, but also of virtue, that we may not do aught unworthy of such a relationship. And how it may be said is it possible to be a son of God? by being free from all passions, and

showing gentleness to them that affront and wrong us. For thy Father is so to them that blaspheme Him. Wherefore, though He says various things at various times, yet in no case does He say that ye may be like your Father, but when He says, "Pray for them that despitefully use you, do good to them that hate you" (ib. 5:44), then He brings in this as the reward. For there is nothing that brings us so near to God, and makes us so like Him, as this well-doing. Therefore Paul also, when he says, "Be ye followers of God" (Ephesians 5:1), means them to be so in this respect. For we have need of all good deeds, chiefly however of love to man and gentleness, since we need so much of His love to man ourselves. For we commit many transgressions every day. Wherefore also we have need to show much mercy. But much and little is not measured by the quantity of things given, but by the amount of the givers' means. Let not then the rich be high-minded, nor the poor dejected as giving so little, for the latter often gives more than the former. We must not then make ourselves miserable because we are poor, since it makes alms-giving the easier for us. For he that has got much together is seized with haughtiness, as well as a greater affection to that he has. But he that hath but a little is quit of either of these domineering passions: hence he finds more occasions for doing well. For this man will go cheerfully into a prison-house, and will visit the sick, and will give a cup of cold water. But the other will not take upon him any office of this sort, as pampered up, by his riches. Be not then out of heart at thy poverty. For thy poverty makes thy traffic for heaven the easier to thee. And if thou have nothing, but have a compassionating soul, even this will be laid up as a reward for thee. Hence too Paul bade us "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15), and exhorted us to be to prisoners as though bound with them. (Hebrews 13:3.) For it is not to them that weep only that it yieldeth some solace that there be many that compassionate them, but to them who are in other afflicting circumstances. For there are cases where conversation has as much power to recover him that is cast down as money. For this then God exhorts us to give money to them that ask, not merely with a view to relieve their poverty, but that He may teach us to compassionate the misfortunes of our neighbors. For this also the covetous man is odious, in that he not only disregards men in a beggared state, but because he gets himself trained for cruelty and great inhumanity. And so he that, for their sakes, thinks little of money, is even on this account an object of love, that he is merciful and kind to man. And Christ, when He blesseth the merciful, blesseth and praiseth not those only that give the alms of money, but those also who have the will to do so. Let us then be so inclinable to mercy, and all other blessings will follow, for he that hath a spirit of love and mercy, if he have money, will give it away, or if he see any in distress, will weep and bewail it; if he fall in with a person wronged, will stand up for him; if he sees one spitefully entreated, will reach out his hand to him. For as he has that treasure-house of blessings, a loving and merciful soul, he will make it a fountain for all his brethren's needs, and will enjoy all he rewards that are laid up with God. That we then may attain to these, let us of all things frame our souls accordingly. For so, while in this world, we shall do good deeds without number, and shall enjoy the crowns to come. To which may we all attain by the grace and love toward man, etc.