



# COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

## Chapter 5

**Verse 5:1.** *"Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

What does "Let us have peace" mean? Some say, "Let us not be at variance, through a peevish obstinacy for bringing in the Law." But to me he seems to be speaking now of our conversation. For after having said much on the subject of faith, he had set it before righteousness which is by works, to prevent any one from supposing what he said was a ground for listlessness, he says, "let us have peace," that is, let us sin no more, nor go back to our former estate. For this is making war with God. And "how is it possible," saith one, "to sin no more?" How was the former thing possible? For if when liable for so many sins we were freed from all. by Christ, much more shall we be able through Him to abide in the estate wherein we are. For it is not the same thing to receive peace when there had been none, and to keel it when it has been given, since to acquire surely is harder than to keep. Yet nevertheless the more difficult hath been made easy, and carried out into effect. That which is the easier thing then will be what we shall easily succeed in, if we cling to Him who hath wrought even the other for us. But here it is not the easiness only which he seems to me to hint at, but the reasonableness. For if He reconciled us when we were in open war with Him, it is reasonable that we should abide in a state of reconciliation, and give unto Him this reward for that He may not seem to have reconciled untoward and unfeeling creatures to the Father.

**Verse 2.** *"By Whom also we have access," he says, "by faith unto this grace."*

If then He hath brought us near to Himself, when we were far off, much more will He keep us now that we are near. And let me beg you to consider how he everywhere sets down these two points; His part, and our part. On His part, however, there be things varied and numerous and diverse. For He died for us, and farther reconciled us, and brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought faith only as our contribution. And so he says, "by faith, unto this grace" What grace is this? tell me. It is the being counted worthy of the knowledge of God, the being forced from error, the coming to a knowledge of the Truth, the obtaining of all the blessings that come through Baptism. For the end of His bringing us near was that we might receive these gifts. For it was not only that we might have simple remission of sins, that we were reconciled; but that we might receive also countless benefits. Nor did He even pause at these, but promised others, namely, those unutterable blessings that pass understanding alike and language. And this is why he has set them both down also. For by mentioning grace he clearly points at what we have at present received, but by saying, "And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," he unveils the whole of things to come. And he had well said, "wherein also we stand." For this is the nature of God's grace. It hath no end, it knows no bound, but evermore is on the advance to greater things, which in human things is not the case. Take an instance of what I mean. A person has acquired

rule and glory and authority, yet he does not stand therein continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. Or if man take it not from him, death comes, and is sure to take it from him. But God's gifts are not of this kind; for neither man, nor occasion, nor crisis of affairs, nor even the Devil, nor death, can come and cast us out of them. But when we are dead we then more strictly speaking have possession of them, and keep going on enjoying more and more. And so if thou feel in doubt about those to come; from those now present, and what thou hast already received, believe in the other also. For this is why he says, "And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," that you may learn, what kind of soul the faithful ought to have. For it is not only for what hath been given, but for what is to be given, that we ought to be filled with confidingness, as though it were already given. For one "rejoices" in what is already given. Since then the hope of things to come is even as sure and clear as that of what is given, he says that in that too we in like manner "rejoice." For this cause also he called them glory. For if it contributeth unto God's glory, come to pass it certainly will, though it do not for our sakes, yet for Him it will. And why am I saying (he means) that the blessings to come are worthy of being gloried in? Why even the very evils of this time present are able to brighten up our countenances, and make us find in them even our repose. Wherefore also he added,

**Verse 3.** *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also."*

Now, consider how great the things to come are, when even at things that seem to be distressful we can be elated; so great is God's gift, and such a nothing any distastefulness in them! For in the case of external goods, the struggle for them brings trouble and pain and irksomeness along with it; and it is the crowns and rewards that carry the pleasure with them. But in this case it is not so, for the wrestlings have to us no less relish than the rewards. For since there were sundry temptations in those days, and the kingdom existed in hopes, the terrors were at hand, but the good things in expectation, and this unnerved the feebler sort, even before the crowns he gives them the prize now, by saying that we should "glory even in tribulations." And what he says is not "you should glory," but we glory, giving them encouragement in his own person. Next since what he had said had an appearance of being strange and paradoxical, if a person who is struggling in famine, and is in chains and torments, and insulted, and abused, ought to glory, he next goes on to confirm it. And (what is more), he says they are worthy of being gloried in, not only for the sake of those things to come, but for the things present in themselves. For tribulations are in their own selves a goodly thing. How so? It is because they anoint us unto patient abiding. Wherefore after saying we glory in tribulations, he has added the reason, in these words, "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Notice again the argumentative spirit of Paul, how he gives their argument an opposite turn. For since it was tribulations above all that made them give up the hopes of things to come, and which cast them into despondency, he says that these are the very reasons for confidingness, and for not desponding about the things to come, for "tribulation," he says, "worketh patience."

**Verse 4, 5.** *"And patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed."*

Tribulations; that is, are so far from confuting these hopes, that they even prove them. For before the things to come are realized, there is a very great fruit which tribulation hath - patience; and the making of the man that is tried, experienced. And it contributes in some degree too to the things to come, for it gives hope a vigor within us, since there is nothing that so inclines a man to hope for blessings as a good conscience. Now no man that has lived an upright life is unconfiding about things to come, as of those

who have been negligent there are many that, feeling the burden of a bad conscience, wish there were neither judgment nor retribution. What then? do our goods lie in hopes? Yes, in hopes - but not mere human hopes, which often slip away, and put him that hoped to shame; when some one, who was expected to patronize him, dies, or is altered though he lives. No such lot is ours: our hope is sure and unmoveable. For He Who hath made the promise ever liveth, and we that are to be the enjoyers of it, even should we die, shall rise again, and there is absolutely nothing which can put us to shame, as having been elated at random, and to no purpose, upon unsound hopes. Having then sufficiently cleared them of all doubtfulness by these words of his, he does not let his discourse pause at the time present, but urges again the time to come, knowing that there were men of weaker character, who looked too for present advantages, and were not satisfied with these mentioned. And so he offers a proof for them in blessings already given. For lest any should say, But what if God be unwilling to give them to us? For that He can, and that He abideth and liveth, we all know: but how do we know, that He is willing, also, to do it? From the things which have been done already. "What things done?" The Love which He hath shown for us. In doing what? some may say. In giving the Holy Ghost. Wherefore after saying "hope maketh not ashamed," he goes on to the proof of this, as follows:

"Because the love of God is," he does not say "given," but "shed abroad in our hearts," so showing the profusion of it. That gift then, which is the greatest possible, He hath given; not heaven and earth and sea, but what is more precious than any of these, and hath rendered us Angels from being men, yea sons of God, and brethren of Christ. But what is this gift? The Holy Spirit. Now had He not been willing to present us after our labors with great crowns, He would never have given us such mighty gifts before our labors. But now the warmth of His Love is hence made apparent, that it is not gradually and little by little that He honors us; but He hath shed abroad the full fountain of His blessings, and this too before our struggles. And so, if thou art not exceedingly worthy, despond not, since thou hast that Love of thy Judge as a mighty pleader for thee. For this is why he himself by saying, "hope maketh not ashamed," has ascribed everything not to our well-doings, but to God's love. But after mentioning the gift of the Spirit, he again passes to the Cross, speaking as follows:

**Verse 6-8.** *"For while we were yet without strength, Christ in due time died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us."*

Now what he is saying is somewhat of this kind. For if for a virtuous man, no one would hastily choose to die, consider thy Master's love, when it is not for virtuous men, but for sinners and enemies that He is seen to have been crucified - which he says too after this, "In that, if when we were sinners Christ died for us,"

**Verse 9, 10.** *"Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*

And what he has said looks indeed like tautology, but it is not to any one who accurately attends to it. Consider then. He wishes to give them reasons for confidence respecting things to come. And first he gives them a sense of shame from the righteous man's decision, when he says, that he also "was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able also to perform;" and next from the grace that was

given; then from the tribulation, as sufficing to lead us into hopes; and again from the Spirit, whom we have received. Next from death, and from our former viciousness, he maketh this good. And it seems indeed, as I said, that what he had mentioned was one thing, but it is discovered to be two, three, and even many more. First, that "He died;" second, that it was "for the ungodly;" third, that He "reconciled, saved, justified" us, made us immortal, made us sons and heirs. It is not from His Death then only, he says, that we draw strong assertions, but from the gift which was given unto us through His Death. And indeed if He had died only for such creatures as we be, a proof of the greatest love would what He had done be! but when He is seen at once dying, and yielding us a gift, and that such a gift, and to such creatures, what was done casts into shade our highest conceptions, and leads the very dullest on to faith. For there is no one else that will save us, except He Who so loved us when we were sinners, as even to give Himself up for us. Do you see what a ground this topic affords for hope? For before this there were two difficulties in the way of our being saved; our being sinners, and our salvation requiring the Lord's Death, a thing which was quite incredible before it took place, and required exceeding love for it to take place. But now since this hath come about, the other requisites are easier. For we have become friends, and there is no further need of Death. Shall then He who hath so spared his enemies as not to spare His Son, fail to defend them now they are become friends, when He hath no longer any need to give up his Son? For it is either because a person does not wish it, or because though he may wish it perhaps, yet he is unable to do it, that he does not save. Now none of these things can be said of God. For that He is willing is plain from His having given up His Son. But that He is able also is the very thing He proved likewise, from the very fact of His having justified men who were sinners. What is there then to prevent us any more from obtaining the things to come? Nothing! Then again, lest upon hearing of sinners, and enemies, and strengthless ones, and ungodly, thou shouldest be inclined to feel abashed and blush; hear what he says.

**Verse 11.** *"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement."*

What meaneth the "not only so?" Not only were we saved, he means, but we even glory for this very reason, for which some suppose we ought to hide our faces. For, for us who lived in so great wickedness to be saved, was a very great mark of our being exceedingly beloved by Him that saved us. For it was not by angels or archangels, but by His Only-begotten Son Himself, that He saved us. And so the fact of His saving us, and saving us too when we were in such plight, and doing it by means of His Only-begotten, and not merely by His Only begotten, but by His Blood, weaves for us endless crowns to glory in. For there is not anything that counts so much in the way of glory and confidence, as the being treated as friends by God, and finding a Friend in Him that loveth us. This it is that maketh the angels glorious, and the principalities and powers. This is greater than the Kingdom, and so Paul placed it above the Kingdom. For this also I count the incorporeal powers blessed, because they love Him, and in all things obey Him. And on this score the Prophet also expressed his admiration at them. "Ye that excel in strength, that fulfill His Word." (Psalm 103:20.) And hence too Isaiah extolleth the Seraphim, setting forth their great excellency from their standing near that glory, which is a sign of the greatest love.

Let us then emulate the powers above, and be desirous not only of standing near the throne, but of having Him dwelling in us who sitteth upon the Throne. He loved us when we hated Him, and also continueth to love us. "For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45.) As then He loveth us, do thou love Him. For He is our

Friend. And how cometh it, some will say, that one who is our Friend threateneth hell, and punishment, and vengeance? It is owing to His loving us alone. For all He doeth and is busied with, is with a view to strike out thy wickedness, and to refrain with fear, as with a kind of bridle, thy inclinableness to the worse side, and by blessings and by pains recovering thee from thy downward course, and leading thee up to Him, and keeping thee from all vice, which is worse than hell. But if thou mockest what is said, and wouldest rather live continually in misery, than be punished for a single day, it is no marvel. For this is but a sign of thy unformed judgment, drunkenness, and incurable disorder. Since little children even when they see the physician going to apply burning or the knife, flee and leap away screaming and convulsed, and choose to have a continual sore eating into their body, rather than to endure a temporary pain, and so enjoy health afterwards. But those who have come to discretion, know that to be diseased is worse than submitting to the knife, as also to be wicked is worse than to be punished. For the one is to be cured and to be healthy, the other to ruin one's constitution and to be in continual feebleness. Now that health is better than feebleness, surely is plain to every one. Thieves then ought to weep not when they have their sides pierced through, but when they pierce through walls and murder. For if the soul be better than the body (as it is), when the former is ruined there is more reason to groan and lament; but if a man does not feel it, so much the more reason to bewail it. For those that love with an unchastened love ought to be more pitied than those who have a violent fever, and those that are drunken, than those that are undergoing torture. But if these are more painful (some may say), how come we to give them the preference? Because there are many of mankind, who, as the proverb saith, like the worse, and they choose these, and pass by the better. And this one may see happening as well in victuals as in forms of government, in emulous aims of life too, and in the enjoyment of pleasure, and in wives, and in houses, and in slaves, and in lands, and in the case of all other things. For which is more pleasurable pray, cohabiting with women or with males? with women or with mules? Yet still we shall find many that pass over women, and cohabit with creatures void of reason, and abuse the bodies of males. Yet natural pleasures are greater than unnatural ones. But still many there are that follow after things ridiculous and joyless, and accompanied with a penalty, as if pleasurable. Well but to them, a man may say, these things appear so. Now this alone is ground enough to make them miserable, that they think those things to be pleasurable which are not so. Thus they assume punishment to be worse than sin which it is not, but just the contrary. Yet, if it were an evil to the sinner, God would not have added evils to the evil; for He that doeth everything to extinguish evil, would not have increased it. Being punished then is no evil to the man who has done wrong, but not being punished, when in that plight, is evil, just as for the infirm not to be cured. For there is nothing so evil as extravagant desire. And when I say, extravagant, I mean that of luxury, and that of ill-placed glory, and that of power, and in general that of all things which go beyond what is necessary. For such is he who lives a soft and dissolute life, who seems to be the happiest of men, but is the most wretched, as superinducing upon his soul harsh and tyrannical sovereigns. For this cause hath God made the present a life of labor to us, that He may rid us of that slavery, and bring us into genuine freedom. For this cause He threatened punishment, and made labors a part of our portion in life, so muzzling our vaunting spirit. In this way the Jews also, when they were fettered to the clay and brick making, were at once self-governed, and called continually upon God. But when they were in the enjoyment of freedom, then they murmured, and provoked the Lord, and pierced themselves through with countless evils. What then, it may be said, will you say to those frequent instances of men being altered for the worse by tribulations? Why, that this is no effect of tribulation, but of their own imbecility. For neither if a man had a weak stomach and could not take a bitter medicine which would act as a purgative, but was made even worse by it, would it be the drug we should find fault with, but the weakness of the part, as we should therefore here too with the

yieldingness of temper. For he who is altered so by tribulation, is much more likely to be affected in this way by laxity. If he fails even when splinted, (or tied) (this is what affliction is), much more will he when the bandage is removed. If when braced up he is altered, much more when in a state of tumor. And how am I, one may ask, to keep from being so altered by tribulation? Why, if thou reflectest that, wish it or not, thou wilt have to bear the thing inflicted: but if thou dost it with a thankful spirit, thou wilt gain very greatly thereby but if thou art indignant at it, and ragest and blasphemest, thou wilt not make the calamity lighter, but thou wilt render its wave more troublous. By feeling then in this way, let us turn what is necessary into a matter of our own choice. What I mean is this - suppose one has lost his own son, another all his property: if you reflect that it is not in the nature of things for what has taken place to be undone; while it is to gain fruit from the misfortune, though irremediable, even that of bearing the circumstance nobly; and if instead of using blasphemous words, thou wert to offer up words of thanksgiving to the Lord, so would evils brought upon thee against thy will become to thee the good deeds of a free choice. Hast thou seen a son taken prematurely away? Say, "the Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away." Do you see your fortune exhausted? Say, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." (Job. 1:21.) Do you see evil men faring well, and just men faring ill and undergoing ills without number, and dost thou not know where to find the cause? Say, "I became even as it were a beast before Thee. Yet I am ever with Thee." (Psalm 73:22.) But if thou wilt search out the cause, reflect that He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world, and so you will throw off perplexity, for then every man will meet his deserts, even as Lazarus and the rich man. Call to mind the Apostles, for they too rejoiced at being scourged, at being driven about and undergoing numberless sufferings, because they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name's sake." (Acts 5:41.) And do thou, then, if thou art sick, bear it nobly, and own thyself indebted to God for it, and thou shall receive the same reward with them. But how, when in feebleness and pain, art thou to be able to feel grateful to the Lord? Thou wilt if thou lovest Him sincerely. For if the Three Children who were thrown into the furnace, and others who were in prisons, and in countless other evils, ceased not to give thanks, much more will they who are in a state of disease, be able to do this. For there is not, assuredly there is not, anything which vehement desire doth not get the better of. But when the desire is even that of God, it is higher than anything, and neither fire, nor the sword, nor poverty, nor infirmity, nor death, nor aught else of the kind appeareth dreadful to one who hath gotten this love, but scorning them all, he will fly to heaven, and will have affections no way inferior to those of its inhabitants, seeing nothing else, neither heaven, nor earth, nor sea, but gazing only at the one Beauty of that glory. And neither the vexations of this life present will depress him, nor the things which are goodly and attended with pleasure elate him or puff him up. Let us then love with this love (for there is not anything equal unto it) both for the sake of things present and for the sake of things to come. Or rather, more than for these, for the nature of the love itself. For we shall be set free both from the punishments of this life and of that which is to come, and shall enjoy the kingdom. Yet neither is the escape from hell, nor the fruition of the kingdom, anything great in comparison of what is yet to be said. For greater than all these things is it to have Christ our beloved at once and our lover. For if when this happens with men it is above all pleasure; when both happen from God, what language or what thought is able to set before one the blessedness of this soul? There is none that can, save the experience of it only. That then we may by experience come to know what is this spiritual joy, and life of blessedness, and untold treasure of good things, let us leave everything to cling to that love, with a view as well to our own joy as to the glory of God. For unto Him is the glory and power, with His Only-begotten, and the Holy Ghost, now, and ever, and unto all ages evermore. Amen.

**Verse 12.** *“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*

As the best physicians always take great pains to discover the source of diseases, and go to the very fountain of the mischief, so doth the blessed Paul also. Hence after having said that we were justified, and having shown it from the Patriarch, and from the Spirit, and from the dying of Christ (for He would not have died unless He intended to justify), he next confirms from other sources also what he had at such length demonstrated. And he confirms his proposition from things opposite, that is, from death and sin. How, and in what way? He enquires whence death came in, and how it prevailed. How then did death come in and prevail? “Through the sin of one.” But what means, “for that all have sinned?” This; he having once fallen, even they that had not eaten of the tree did from him, all of them, become mortal.

**Verse 13.** *“For until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law.”*

The phrase “till the Law” some think he used of the time before the giving of the Law - that of Abel, for instance, or of Noah, or of Abraham - till Moses was born. What was the sin in those days, at this rate? some say he means that in Paradise. For hitherto it was not done away, (he would say,) but the fruit of it was yet in vigor. For it had born that death whereof all partake, which prevailed and lorded over us. Why then does he proceed, “But sin is not imputed when there is no law?” It was by way of objection from the Jews, say they who have spoken on our side, that he laid this position down and said, if there be no sin without the Law, how came death to consume all those before the Law? But to me it seems that the sense presently to be given has more to be said for it, and suits better with the Apostle’s meaning. And what sense is this? In saying, that “till the Law sin was in the world,” what he seems to me to mean is this, that after the Law was given the sin resulting from the transgression of it prevailed, and prevailed too so long as the Law existed. For sin, he says, can have no existence if there be no law. If then it was this sin, he means, from the transgression of the Law that brought forth death, how was it that all before the Law died? For if it is in sin that death hath its origin, but when there is no law, sin is not imputed, how came death to prevail? From whence it is clear, that it was not this sin, the transgression, that is, of the Law, but that of Adam’s disobedience, which marred all things. Now what is the proof of this? The fact that even before the Law all died: for “death reigned” he says, “from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned.”

How did it reign? “After the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.” Now this is why Adam is a type of Christ. How a type? it will be said. Why in that, as the former became to those who were sprung from him, although they had not eaten of the tree, the cause of that death which by his eating was introduced; thus also did Christ become to those sprung from Him, even though they had not wrought righteousness, the Provider of that righteousness which through His Cross He graciously bestowed on us all. For this reason, at every turn he keeps to the “one,” and is continually bringing it before us, when he says, “As by one man sin entered into the world” - and, “If through the offense of one many be dead:” and, “Not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift;” and, “The judgment was by one to condemnation:” and again, “If by one (or, the one) man’s offense death reigned by one;” and “Therefore as by the offense of one.” And again, “As by one man’s disobedience many (or, the many) were made sinners.” And so he letteth not go of the one, that when the Jew says to thee, How came it, that by the well-doing of this one Person, Christ, the world was saved? thou mightest be able to

say to him, How by the disobedience of this one person, Adam, came it to be condemned? And yet sin and grace are not equivalents, death and life are not equivalents, the Devil and God are not equivalents, but there is a boundless space between them. When then as well from the nature of the thing as from the power of Him that transacteth it, and from the very suitableness thereof (for it suiteth much better with God to save than to punish), the preeminence and victory is upon this side, what one word have you to say for unbelief, tell me? However, that what had been done was reasonable, he shows in the following words.

**Verse 15.** *“But not as the offense, so is also the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many.”*

For what he says is somewhat of this kind. If sin had so extensive effects, and the sin of one man too; how can grace, and that the grace of God, not the Father only, but also the Son, do otherwise than be the more abundant of the two? For the latter is far the more reasonable supposition. For that one man should be punished on account of another does not seem to be much in accordance with reason. But for one to be saved on account of another is at once more suitable and more reasonable. If then the former took place, much more may the latter. Hence he has shown from these grounds the likelihood and reasonableness of it. For when the former had been made good, this would then be readily admitted. But that it is even necessarily so, he makes good from what follows. How then does he make it good?

**Verse 16.** *“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift. For the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.”*

And what is this that he is speaking of? It is that sin had power to bring in death and condemnation; but grace did not do away that one sin only, but also those that followed after in its train. Lest then the words “as” and “so” might seem to make the measure of the blessings and the evils equal, and that you might not think, upon hearing of Adam, that it was only that sin which he had brought in which was done away with, he says that it was from many offenses that an indemnity was brought about. How is this plain? Because after the numberless sins committed after that in paradise, the matter issued in justification. But where righteousness is, there of necessity follows by all means life, and the countless blessings, as does death where sin was. For righteousness is more than life, since it is even the root of life. That there were several goods then brought in, and that it was not that sin only that was taken away, but all the rest along with it, he points out when he says, that “the gift was of many offenses unto justification.” In which a proof is necessarily included, that death was also torn up by the roots. But since he had said, that the second was greater than the first, he is obliged to give further grounds again for this same thing. For, before, he had said that if one man’s sin slew all, much more will the grace of One have the power to save. After that he shows that it was not that sin only that was done away by the grace, but all the rest too, and that it was not that the sins were done away only, but that righteousness was given. And Christ did not merely do the same amount of good that Adam did of harm, but far more and greater good. Since then he had made such declarations as these, he wants again here also further confirmation of these. And how does he give this confirmation? He says,

**Verse 17.** *“For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift and of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”*



What he says, amounts to this nearly. What armed death against the world? The one man's eating from the tree only. If then death attained so great power from one offense, when it is found that certain received a grace and righteousness out of all proportion to that sin, how shall they still be liable to death? And for this cause, he does not here say "grace," but "superabundance of grace." For it was not as much as we must have to do away the sin only, that we received of His grace, but even far more. For we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above (John 3:3) and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs and of one Body with Him, and counted for His Flesh, and even as a Body with the Head, so were we united unto Him! All these things then Paul calls a "superabundance" of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state. And of these each in itself was enough to do away with death, but when all manifestly run together in one, there is not the least vestige of it left, nor can a shadow of it be seen, so entirely is it done away. As then if any one were to cast a person who owed ten mites into prison, and not the man himself only, but wife and children and servants for his sake; and another were to come and not to pay down the ten mites only, but to give also ten thousand talents of gold, and to lead the prisoner into the king's courts, and to the throne of the highest power, and were to make him partaker of the highest honor and every kind of magnificence, the creditor would not be able to remember the ten mites; so hath our case been. For Christ hath paid down far more than we owe, yea as much more as the illimitable ocean is than a little drop. Do not then, O man, hesitate as thou seest so great a store of blessings, nor enquire how that mere spark of death and sin was done away, when such a sea of gifts was brought in upon it. For this is what Paul intimated by saying that "they who have received the abundance of the grace and righteousness shall reign in life." And as he had now clearly demonstrated this, he again makes use of his former argument, clenching it by taking up the same word afresh, and saying that if for that offense all were punished, then they may be justified too by these means. And so he says,

**Verse 18.** *"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."*

And he insists again upon it, saying,

**Verse 19.** *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."*

What he says seems indeed to involve no small question: but if any one attends to it diligently, this too will admit of an easy solution. What then is the question? It is the saying that through the offense of one many were made sinners. For the fact that when he had sinned and become mortal, those who were of him should be so also, is nothing unlikely. But how would it follow that from his disobedience another would become a sinner? For at this rate a man of this sort will not even deserve punishment, if, that is, it was not from his own self that he became a sinner. What then does the word "sinners" mean here? To me it seems to mean liable to punishment and condemned to death. Now that by Adam's death we all became mortals, he had shown clearly and at large. But the question now is, for what purpose was this done? But this he does not go on to add: for it contributed nothing to his present object. For it is against

a Jew that the contest is, who doubted and made scorn of the righteousness by One. And for this reason after showing that the punishment too was brought in by one upon all, the reason why this was so he has not added. For he is not for superfluities, but keeps merely to what is necessary. For this is what the principles of disputation did not oblige him to say any more than the Jew; and therefore he leaves it unsolved. But if any of you were to enquire with a view to learn, we should give this answer: That we are so far from taking any harm from this death and condemnation, if we be sober-minded, that we are the gainers even by having become mortal, first, because it is not an immortal body in which we sin; secondly, because we get numberless grounds for being religious. For to be moderate, and to be temperate, and to be subdued, and to keep ourselves clear of all wickedness, is what death by its presence and by its being expected persuades us to. But following with these, or rather even before these, it hath introduced other greater blessings besides. For it is from hence that the crowns of the martyrs come, and the rewards of the Apostles. Thus was Abel justified, thus was Abraham, in having slain his son, thus was John, who for Christ's sake was taken off, thus were the Three Children, thus was Daniel. For if we be so minded, not death only, but even the devil himself will be unable to hurt us. And besides there is this also to be said, that immortality awaits us, and after having been chastened a little while, we shall enjoy the blessings to come without fear, being as if in a sort of school in the present life, under instruction by means of disease, tribulation, temptations, and poverty, and the other apparent evils, with a view to our becoming fit for the reception of the blessings of the world to come.

**Verse 20.** *“Moreover the Law entered: that the offense might abound.”*

Since then he had shown that the world was condemned from Adam, but from Christ was saved and freed from condemnation, he now seasonably enters upon the discussion of the Law, here again undermining the high notions of it. For it was so far from doing any good, he means, or from being any way helpful, but the disorder was only increased by its having come in. But the particle “that” again does not assign the cause, but the result. For the purpose of its being given was not “in order that” it might abound, for it was given to diminish and destroy the offense. But it resulted the opposite way, not owing to the nature of the Law, but owing to the listlessness of those who received it. But why did he not say the Law was given, but “the Law entered by the way?” It was to show that the need of it was temporary, and not absolute or imperative. And this he says also to the Galatians, showing the very same thing another way. “For before faith came,” he says, “we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” And so it was not for itself, but for another, that it kept the flock. For since the Jews were somewhat gross-minded, and enervated, and indifferent to the gifts themselves, this was why the Law was given, that it might convict them the more, and clearly teach them their own condition, and by increasing the accusation might the more repress them. But be not thou afraid, for it was not that the punishment might be greater that this was done, but that the grace might be seen to be greater. And this is why he proceeds,

*“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”*

He does not say did abound, but “did much more abound.” For it was not remission from punishment only that He gave us, but that from sins, and life also. As if any were not merely to free a man with a fever from his disease, but to give him also beauty, and strength, and rank; or again, were not to give one an hungered nourishment only, but were to put him in possession of great riches, and were to set him in the highest authority. And how did sin abound? some will say. The Law gave countless

commands. Now since they transgressed them all, transgression became more abundant. Do you see what a great difference there is between grace and the Law? For the one became an addition to the condemnation, but the other, a further abundance of gifts. Having then mentioned the unspeakable munificence, he again discusses the beginning and the root both of death and of life. What then is the root of death? It is sin. Wherefore also he saith,

**Verse 21.** *“That as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

This he says to show that the latter ranks as a king, the former, death, as a soldier, being marshaled under the latter, and armed by it. If then the latter (i.e. sin) armed death, it is plain enough that the righteousness destructive hereof, which by grace was introduced, not only disarms death, but even destroys it, and undoes entirely the dominion thereof, in that it is the greatest of the two, as being brought in not by man and the devil, but by God and grace, and leading our life unto a goodlier estate, and to blessings unlimited. For of it there will never be any end (to give you a view of its superiority from this also). For the other cast us out of our present life, but grace, when it came, gave us not the present life, but the immortal and eternal one. But for all these things Christ is our voucher. Doubt not then for thy life if thou hast righteousness, for righteousness is greater than life as being mother of it.