

ROMANS CHAPTER 1

Romans 1:1–3

All the promises which were made to the church of old, of the Messiah as a future Saviour, from that made to our first parents in paradise, to that which was delivered by the prophet Malachi, show it to be impossible that Christ should not have persevered in perfect holiness. The ancient predictions given to God's church, of the Messiah as a Savior, were of the nature of promises; as is evident by the predictions themselves, and the manner of delivering them. But they are expressly, and very often called promises in the New Testament; as in *Luke 1:54–55*, *Luke 1:72–73*; *Acts 13:32–33*; *Romans 1:1–3*; and *ch. 15:8*; *Hebrews 6:13*, etc. These promises were often made with great solemnity, and confirmed with an oath; as in *Genesis 22:16–17*, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore: . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. *Freedom of the Will (WJE Online Vol. 1)*

Romans 1:3–4

Christ's anointing don't only mark out Christ as being our mediator, but 'tis his anointing that qualifies and fits him for the work of mediator; hence arises the value and efficacy of his sufferings and obedience. If he had not been anointed, they would not have availed; because if it had not been for this anointing with the Holy Ghost, he would not have been united to the divine nature. 'Tis by the Holy Spirit that Christ is the Son of God. *Romans 1:3–4*, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God

The Power of God

with power, according to the Spirit of holiness.” Hence arises the value of Christ’s sacrifice. *Hebrews 9:14*, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works.” It was by virtue of this anointing, his thus having the Spirit, that he was accepted and justified as our mediator. *1 Timothy 3:16*, “Justified in the Spirit.” And therefore, the same Holy Ghost by which he was begotten in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was that by which he was begotten again from the dead in the womb of the earth. *1 Peter 3:18*, “Put to death in the flesh, quickened by the Spirit.”

Romans 1:4

Hence it is that the Spirit of God, the third person in the Trinity, is so often called the Holy Spirit, as though “Holy” were an epithet some way or other peculiarly belonging to him, which can be no other way than that the holiness of God does consist in him. He is not only infinitely holy as the Father and the Son are, but he is the holiness of God itself in the abstract. The holiness of the Father and the Son does consist in breathing forth this Spirit. Therefore he is not only called the Holy Spirit, but the “Spirit of holiness.” *Romans 1:4*, “According to the Spirit of holiness.” *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith (WJE Online Vol. 21)*

Romans 1:5

See *1 Corinthians 1:1*. “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ *through the will of God.*” St. Paul, when he calls himself an apostle, does commonly add some such clause, as here, “through the will of God.” So *2 Corinthians 1:1*, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”; and the very same words, *Ephesians 1:1*, and *Colossians 1:1*, and *2 Timothy 1:1*. And *1 Timothy 1:1*, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ”; and *Romans 1:1*, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” *Romans 1:5*, “By whom we have received grace and apostleship,” which was because he continually carried a deep sense of his unworthiness to be an apostle, who before was so great a sinner; and how it was not owing to anything in him that he was promoted to such dignity, but only to the sovereign will, and pleasure, and free grace of God, that, of a persecutor of the church, made him an apostle in the church. Therefore when he takes the honor of the name of an apostle, he ascribes [it] to God’s

sovereign pleasure and grace. The cause of it is a sense of what he expresses in *1 Corinthians 15:9–10*. “For I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.” *Ephesians 3:8*, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” *Notes on Scripture (WJE Online Vol. 15)*

Romans 1:5

“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations *for his name*.” *Matthew 19:29*, “Everyone that forsaketh houses or brethren, etc. . . . *for my name’s sake*, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” *3 John 7*, “Because that *for his name’s sake* they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.” *Revelation 2:3*, “And hast borne, and hast patience, and *for my name’s sake* hast labored, and hast not fainted.” *Ethical Writings (WJE Online Vol. 8)*

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Romans 1:6

This is ascribed to Jesus Christ. *Romans 1:6*, “Among whom also ye are the called of Jesus Christ.” *1 Corinthians 7:17*, “as the Lord hath called every-one.” *John 10:3*, “and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.” *John 10:16*, “other sheep have I, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring in, and they shall hear my voice.” *Ephesians 1:18*, “that ye

The Power of God

may know what is the hope of his calling.” *The “Miscellanies,” (Entry Nos. 1153–1360) (WJE Online Vol. 23)*

Romans 1:7

The apostles in the very superscription or direction of their letters to these churches, and in their salutations at the beginning of their epistles, speak of them as gracious persons. For instance, the apostle Peter in the direction of his first letter to all professing Jewish Christians through many countries, says thus [*1 Peter 1:1–2*], “To the strangers scattered through Pontus, etc. elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” And in directing his second epistle to the same persons, he says thus [*2 Peter 1:1*], “Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us,” etc. And the apostle Paul directs his epistle to the Romans thus [*Romans 1:7*], “To them that be at Rome, beloved of God.” *Ecclesiastical Writings (WJE Online Vol. 12)*

The apostles continually in their epistles speak to them and of them as supposing and judging them to be gracious persons. Thus the apostle Paul in his epistle to the church of the Romans, ch. *Romans 1:7*, speaks of the members of that church as “beloved of God.” In ch. *Romans 6:17–18*, etc. he “thanks God that they had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which had been delivered them, and were made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness,” etc. *Ecclesiastical Writings (WJE Online Vol. 12)*

So the Apostle, in the beginning of his epistle to the Romans, says that he writes to those at Rome that were “beloved of God, called to be saints” [*Romans 1:7*], and yet he exhorts ‘em to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. *Romans 12:1–2*, “I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed unto this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” *Sermons and Discourses, 1739–1742 (WJE Online Vol. 22)*

So it was with the church of the ROMANS. The Apostle, in his epistle to the members of that church, calls ‘em “beloved of God.” *Romans 1:7*, “To all that are at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”; i.e. in a judgment of charity, they were such as were beloved of God. So in *Romans 6:17–18*, etc., he says to ‘em, “ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from

the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you,” and “being made free from sin, are become the servants of righteousness.” *Sermons and Discourses, 1743–1758 (WJE Online Vol. 25)*

Romans 1:8

Because it is thus profitable to hear of the work of God in other places, therefore the Apostle praises God that the faith of the Christian Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world. *Romans 1:8*, “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world.” *Sermons and Discourses, 1739–1742 (WJE Online Vol. 22)*

Romans 1:11

So he speaks of his earnest care for others, *2 Corinthians 8:16*, and of his bowels of pity or mercy towards them, *Philippians 2:1*, and of his concern for others, even to anguish of heart, *2 Corinthians 2:4*. “For out of much affliction, and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you, with many tears; not that ye should be grieved; but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” He speaks of the great conflict of his soul for them (*Colossians 2:1*). He speaks of great and continual grief that he had in his heart from compassion to the Jews (*Romans 9:2*). He speaks of his mouth’s being opened, and his heart enlarged towards Christians, *2 Corinthians 6:11*. “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged!” He often speaks of his affectionate and longing desires (*1 Thessalonians 2:8, Romans 1:11, Philippians 1:8* and ch. *4:1, II Timothy 1:4*). *Religious Affections (WJE Online Vol. 2)*

Thus saving knowledge is called “spiritual understanding.” *Colossians 1:9*, “We desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” So the influences, graces and comforts of God’s Spirit are called “spiritual blessings.” *Ephesians 1:3*, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” So the imparting of any gracious benefit is called the imparting of a spiritual gift. *Romans 1:11*, “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift.” And the fruits of the Spirit which are offered to God are called “spiritual sacrifices.” *1 Peter 2:5*, “A spiritual priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” And a spiritual person signifies the same in Scripture as a gracious person, and sometimes one that is much

The Power of God

under the influence of grace. *1 Corinthians 2:15*, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man”; and *1 Corinthians 3:1*, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.” *Galatians 6:1*, “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” And to be graciously minded is called in Scripture a being “spiritually minded.” *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith (WJE Online Vol. 21)*

Romans 1:16

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. That I should be ashamed to preach it at Rome, the metropolis and mistress of the world.” It is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” *Ques.* How is the gospel “the power of God to salvation to those that believe, to the Jew first?” And so it is said in the *Romans 2:10*, that God will render “glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first.” *Arts.* God was ready to justify all that believed in Christ, and to reward all that work good, but especially the Jews, for the peculiar favor he bore to that nation for their forefathers’ sakes, as *Romans 11:28*, and because they were born in covenant, or were his covenant people by descent. See *Romans 2:25*, “For circumcision verily profiteth,” etc. *The “Blank Bible” (WJE Online Vol. 24)*

Romans 1:16–18

Romans 1:16–18. JUSTIFICATION. CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” etc., “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” In these verses I would note two things. First, that here, in the beginning of this discourse of his of the wickedness of the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles, that is continued from this place to the *Romans 3:19*, *Romans 3:20*, and *Romans 3:21* verses of *Romans 3*, as well as in the conclusion in that part of the *Romans 3*, he manifests his design in it all to be to show that all are guilty, and in a state of condemnation, and therefore can’t be saved by their own righteousness, that it must be by the righteousness of God through Christ received by faith alone. He here in the *Romans 3:17* asserts that ‘tis thus only that men have justification, and then in the *Romans 3:18* enters on the reason

why, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness”; and so goes on, setting forth the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men through most of those three first chapters, and then at the end, concludes his argument as he began it, that, seeing all are under sin, “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight” [*Romans* 3:20], but that ‘tis by “the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Christ” [*Romans* 3:22]. Secondly, I observe that by “the righteousness of God” in this place can’t be meant only God’s way of justifying a sinner, but hereby is meant the moral, legal righteousness which God had provided for sinners. ‘Tis evident by two things. 1. ‘Tis the righteousness or justice which those that are justified have, by which they are righteous or just, as is evident by the Apostle’s selecting that passage of the Old Testament to cite on this occasion, “The *just* shall live by faith” [*Habakkuk* 2:4]. 2. ‘Tis evident by the antithesis, for here ‘tis most manifest that the “righteousness of God,” by which God’s people are just, in one verse, is opposed to the “unrighteousness of men,” by which they in themselves are unjust, as is evident by the argument of the Apostle in these verses. ‘Tis a righteousness that believers are vested with, as is evident by *Romans* 3:22–23. The same is also manifest by the antithesis in that place; the same is manifest both those ways, by *Philippians* 3:9. *Notes on Scripture (WJE Online Vol. 15)*

Romans 1:17

By “righteousness” here seems to be meant the way of the justification of sinners by Christ. ‘Tis not only meant Christ’s active [righteousness]: a great deal more is intended than that. So by the term “righteousness,” when it is spoken with respect to the Mediator in Scripture, is almost always thus to be taken. Christ is called “the Lord our righteousness,” that is, he is he in whom we have justification. So it is said, in the Lord Jehovah we have righteousness and strength [*Isaiah* 12:2, *Isaiah* 26:4], that is, in him we have acceptance with God as righteous. We read, *Romans* 4:11, that circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith, i.e. a seal of the way of justification by faith; and [in the] thirteenth verse, that the promise that Abraham should be heir [of the world] was through the righteousness of faith. So, very evidently, it is to be understood, *Romans* 3:21–22 and *Romans* 1:17. It is not to be understood of the holiness of God’s nature, or the personal holiness or innocence of Christ, but God’s way of justifying man. *Sermons and Discourses: 1723–1729 (WJE Online Vol. 14)*

The Power of God

And that God in justification has respect, not only to the first act of faith, but also to future persevering acts, in this sense, viz. as expressed in life, seems manifest by *Romans 1:17*, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith: As it is written, The just shall live by faith.” And *Hebrews 10:38–39*, “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” *Sermons and Discourses, 1734–1738 (WJE Online Vol. 19)*

It seems to be because continuance in faith is necessary to continuance in justification, at least in part, that the Apostle expresses himself as he does, *Romans 1:17*, “For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Or the righteousness of God is revealed, as we receive it and have the benefit of it, from faith, or by faith, unto faith. For ‘tis by faith that we first perceive and know this righteousness, and do at first receive and embrace it, and do at first become interested in it. And being once interested in it, we have the continuance of faith in the future persevering exercises of it made sure to us, which is necessary in order to a suitable continuance [in a] justified state. And, faith continuing, our interest in God’s righteousness continues, and we are continued in a justified state, and shall certainly have the future eternal reward of righteousness. *The “Miscellanies,” (Entry Nos. 1153–1360) (WJE Online Vol. 23)*

“[T]he just shall live by faith” [*Romans 1:17*], agreeable to that, *1 Peter 1:5*, “We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation”; and agreeable to that, *Hebrews 10:35–39*, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul”; and *Hebrews 3:6*, *Hebrews 3:14*, *Hebrews 3:18*, *Hebrews 3:19*, and *Hebrews 4:1*, *Hebrews 4:11*; *Hebrews 6:4*, *Hebrews 6:11*, *Hebrews 6:12*; and the former part of the *John 15*, “Abide in me, and I in you. . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch . . . ; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” [*John 15:4–10*]. It was impossible that Christ should not continue in his Father’s love. He was entitled to such help and support from him as should be effectual to

uphold him in obedience to his Father. And yet it was true that, if Christ had not kept the Father's commandments, he could not have continued in his love. He would have been cast out of favor. *The "Miscellanies," (Entry Nos. 1153–1360) (WJE Online Vol. 23)*

Beware how you entertain any such doctrine as that there is no essential difference between common and saving faith, and that both consist in a mere assent of the understanding to the doctrines of religion. That this doctrine is false appears by what has been said; and if it be false, it must needs be exceedingly dangerous. Saving faith, as you well know, is abundantly insisted on in the Bible as in a peculiar manner the condition of salvation, being the thing by which we are justified. How much is that doctrine insisted on in the New Testament: we are [said to be] justified by faith, and by faith alone; by faith we are saved, and "This is the work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent" [*John 6:29*]; "The just shall live by faith" [*Romans 1:17*]; "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" [*Galatians 3:26*]; "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" [*Mark 16:16*]. Therefore, doubtless saving faith, whatever that be, is the grand condition of an interest in Christ and his great salvation. And if it be so, of what vast importance is it that we should have [a] right notion [of] what it is; for certainly nothing at all—nothing in religion—is of greater importance than that which teaches us how we may be saved. If salvation itself be of infinite importance, then it is of equal importance that we don't mistake the terms of it; and if this be of infinite importance, then that doctrine that teaches that to be the terms that is not so, but very diverse, is infinitely dangerous. What we want a revelation from God for, chiefly, is to teach us the terms of his favor, and the way of salvation. And that which the revelation God has given us in the Bible teaches to be [the] way is faith in Christ; therefore, that doctrine that teaches something else to be saving faith, that is essentially another thing, teaches entirely another way of salvation, and therefore such doctrine does in effect make void the revelation we have in the Bible, as it makes void the special end of it, which is to teach us the true way of salvation. The gospel is the revelation of the way of life by faith in Christ; therefore, he that teaches something else to be that faith which is essentially diverse from what the gospel of Christ teaches, he teaches another gospel, and he does in effect teach another religion than the religion of Christ. For what is religion but that way of exercising our respect to God, which is the term of his favor and acceptance to a title to his eternal rewards? The Scripture teaches this in a special manner to be saving faith in Jesus Christ; therefore, he that

The Power of God

teaches another faith instead of that teaches another religion. Therefore, such doctrine as I have opposed must needs be destructive and damnable, i.e. directly tending to man's damnation, leading such as embrace it to rest in something essentially different from the grand condition of salvation. *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758 (WJE Online Vol. 25)*

Romans 1:18

Though there be a principle of atheism in the heart of all ungodly men, yet there is also a natural faculty of reason, and the atheistical principle never can so far prevail against the principle of reason as so far to hinder its exercise or wholly to put out the light of nature in this particular. God hath showed to every man his own existence by the light of nature; *Romans 1:19-20*, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (*Romans 1:18*). So that the heathen held the truth in unrighteousness; *Romans 1:18*, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733 (WJE Online Vol. 17)*

It seems to be a mistake of many that the Apostle, in what he says of men's wickedness in the *Romans 1*, has respect only to the Gentiles, and that in what he says in the *Romans 2*, he has respect only to the Jews. 'Tis true that in the *Romans 1* he evidently has his eye chiefly on the wickedness that prevailed [in the Gentile] world. But that is not his professed design in it, only to describe the sin of the pagan world, but the wickedness of the world of mankind. 'Tis all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness. And in the *Romans 2* he has his eye chiefly on the Jews, but it is not his professed design to speak only of them, as appears by his beginning in the *Romans 2:1*, the universal terms that he uses in it. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O MAN (not O Jew). WHOSOEVER thou art (*of mankind*, whether Jew or Gentile) that judgest," etc. In the *Romans 1:32*, the Apostle speaks of the wickedness of mankind in general, and shows how they "hold the truth in unrighteousness," as he had said before (*Romans 1:18*). And the special design of that verse is to set forth how they are all alike, and all agreed in wickedness, and in the same kind of wickedness. Though they all have that light that is sufficient to teach them that those that commit such things deserve the

condemnation and wrath of God, and so death and destruction, which they are very ready to acknowledge and declare in the case of others when they see their wickedness, their unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, etc.: I say, though when they see others guilty of such things, they can easily see that they are worthy of death, and are forward to express it, yet they do the very same things, and not only so, but they show plainly that they have just such hearts. They show a full practical consent to all the wickedness of others that they are forward to condemn and to declare worthy of death. Thus unreasonable are they, and inconsistent with themselves. Thus the beginning of the *Romans 2* comes in. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest.” Thou that art forward to condemn others as worthy of death, “for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.” Thou art very unreasonable and exceeding inconsistent with thyself, “for thou that judgest dost the same things,” and showest that thou hast pleasure in their practice. There is at the same time that you judge them, a full practical consent to and good liking of the very same practices. So God of old condemned the Jews for that in their practice they had justified Samaria and Sodom, and were a comfort to ‘em, and yet had judged them (*Ezekiel 16:51–52, Ezekiel 16:54*). *The “Blank Bible” (WJE Online Vol. 24)*

Romans 1:19–20

Doubtless it is the supreme God which is here spoken [of]. And what Godhead of the supreme God—that which is clearly to be seen by the creation of the world—but his supreme Godhead? And what can that invisible glory and power of this God here spoken of be but that by which he is distinguished from other beings and may be known to be what he is? ‘Tis said, that which may be known of God is clearly manifest by this work. But doubtless one thing, and infinitely the most important thing, that may be known of God is his supreme dignity and glory, that glory of his which he has as supreme God. But if the creation of the world ben’t a work peculiar to him, how are these things so clearly manifested by this work? *The “Miscellanies,” (Entry Nos. 1153–1360) (WJE Online Vol. 23)*

Romans 1:19

The whole creation of God preaches to us; its creatures declare to us his majesty, his wisdom and power, and mercy: *Psalms 19:1–2, [Psalms 19:4]*,

The Power of God

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” *Job 12:7–8*, “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.” [See also] *Romans 1:19–20*. If we look to the heavens or the earth; or birds, beasts, or fishes; or plants and trees: if we do but take notice of it, they all declare to us that we ought to worship, to fear, to love and obey, the God that made all these things. The workmanship of God in our own bodies and souls proclaims aloud the same: all the creatures do declare the same thing. *Sermons and Discourses 1720–1723 (WJE Online Vol. 10)*

Romans 1:20

If any object against what has been maintained, that it tends to atheism; I know not on what grounds such an objection can be raised, unless it be that some atheists have held a doctrine of necessity which they suppose to be like this. But if it be so, I am persuaded the Arminians would not look upon it just, that their notion of freedom and contingency should be charged with a tendency to all the errors that ever any embraced, who have held such opinions. The Stoic philosophers, whom the Calvinists are charged with agreeing with, were no atheists, but the greatest theists, and nearest akin to Christians in their opinions concerning the unity and the perfections of the Godhead, of all the heathen philosophers. And Epicurus, that chief father of atheism, maintained no such doctrine of necessity, but was the greatest maintainer of contingency. The doctrine of necessity, which supposes a necessary connection of all events, on some antecedent ground and reason of their existence, is the only medium we have to prove the being of God. And the contrary doctrine of contingency, even as maintained by Arminians (which certainly implies or infers, that events may come into existence, or begin to be, without dependence on anything foregoing, as their cause, ground or reason) takes away all proof of the being of God; which proof is summarily expressed by the Apostle, in *Romans 1:20*. And this is a tendency to atheism with a witness. So that indeed it is the doctrine of Arminians, and not of the Calvinists, that is justly charged with a tendency to atheism; it being built on a foundation that is the utter subversion of every demonstrative argument for the proof of a deity. *Freedom of the Will (WJE Online Vol. 1)*

Romans 1:21

“Glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.” The respect we owe to God consists in two things, viz. a supreme regard to God for what he is in himself as his divine glory, and that respect we owe him for his goodness to us. Both are here mentioned. *The “Blank Bible” (WJE Online Vol. 24)*

Romans 1:22

Their foolish heart was darkened, as the Apostle says (*Romans 1:22*). Being without revelation, notwithstanding all the light of natural reason, they sunk into brutish ignorance and into such vain, absurd, and ridiculous conceptions of things, that we that have been taught better by divine revelation, can scarce conceive how it was possible for rational creatures to have such thoughts. There was not one nation in the whole world, but that of the Jews, that retained the knowledge of the true God. Instead of worshipping him, they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and their dead ancestors and kings. They made images of gold, silver, and brass, and worshipped them as gods. These images they made some in the shape of man; some in the form of calves and oxen; [some in the form of] serpents; some in monstrous shapes, as half human and half of a beast or fish. Some worshipped the fire, and some worshipped devils that used to appear in bodily shapes to them. Some worshipped beasts themselves, such as bulls and serpents. Some worshipped the growth of their fields and gardens. Some made gods of certain mortal diseases, and worshipped them, because they were afraid of them. And the manner of their worshipping their gods showed the gross darkness they were in, which was with innumerable ridiculous and monstrous rites and ceremonies. We read in Scripture of their cutting themselves, till the blood gushed out upon them. Some of their gods they worshipped with most obscene rites. They worshipped the god Bacchus by drunken revels to his honor, which they thought pleasing to him, because he was the god of wine. Others they worshipped with most obscene rites, acts of fornication, and other horribly obscene actions, and unnatural impurities, as not to be mentioned; and thought they did what was well pleasing to their gods. And the images of the gods that they thus worshipped were exhibited naked in a most obscene manner. So it seems to have been with the god of the Moabites that is called Baalpeor, which is a word that signifies one that publicly and boastingly shows his nakedness. And the Moabites used to worship him by acts of uncleanness.

The Power of God

Hence the children of Israel, when they offered “in the matter of Peor,” committed whoredom, as we are told, with the daughters of Moab, [in the] twenty-fifth of Numbers, of which Zimri and Cozbi were an instance. It was a common thing through the heathen world for ‘em to offer human sacrifices to their idols, sometimes adult persons and sometimes children. So they worshipped the god Moloch. They were wont to offer their children to be cruelly tormented to death in the fire to that idol, burning them to death in burning brass. *Sermons and Discourses, 1734–1738 (WJE Online Vol. 19)*

Romans 1:24

Dr. Whitby asserts freedom, not only from coercion, but necessity, to be essential to anything deserving the name of “sin,” and to an action’s being culpable: in these words (*Discourse on Five Points*, ed. 3, p. 348), “If they be thus necessitated, then neither their sins of omission or commission could deserve that name; it being essential to the nature of sin, according to St. Austin’s definition, that it be an action, *a quo liberum est abstinere*. Three things seem plainly necessary to make an action or omission culpable: 1. That it be in our power to perform or forbear it: for, as Origen, and all the fathers say, no man is blameworthy for not doing what he could not do. And elsewhere the Doctor insists, that when any do evil of necessity, what they do is no vice, that they are guilty of no fault, are worthy of no blame, dispraise, or dishonor, but are unblamable. If these things are true, in Dr. Whitby’s sense of necessity, they will prove all such to be blameless, who are given up of God to sin, in what they commit after they are thus given up. That there is such a thing as men’s being judicially given up to sin, is certain, if the Scripture rightly informs us; such a thing being often there spoken of: as in *Psalms 81:12*, “So I gave them up to their own hearts’ lust, and they walked in their own counsels.” *Acts 7:42*, “Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven.” *Romans 1:24*, “Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.” V. 26, “For this cause God gave them up to vile affections.” V. 28, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient.” *Freedom of the Will (WJE Online Vol. 1)*

Some have been finally given up to sin that never have sinned so much as you, nor against so many means; some that never have had so

much wickedness, nor shown so much obstinacy, as particularly those mentioned. *Romans 1:24*, “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.” They were heathen that the Apostle there speaks of, that never heard of the way of salvation, never enjoyed the ordinances of the gospel, their sin and wickedness never comparable to yours. For that is what we are often taught in Scripture, that the heathen that live in darkness don’t provoke God ever so much as sinners under the light of the gospel. And they here mentioned never showed themselves a tenth part so obstinate as you. For though the Apostle observes in the *Romans 1:19–20*, that they had means used with them, yet the means used with them were nothing in comparison of yours. They had only the light of nature, but [you had the light of the gospel]. And if some have sinned more, and under greater means before [they were] given up, [that is] no argument [that] you are not in danger. For God han’t limited himself to such a degree of wickedness and obstinacy in inflicting this judgment, but uses his own sovereign [pleasure]. All that continue obstinate in [wickedness], when God is using means [to reclaim them], deserve it; and he lengthens out his forbearance according to his own sovereign pleasure. *Sermons and Discourses, 1734–1738 (WJE Online Vol. 19)*

Romans 1:25

We may observe its continuance signified here by two expressions: forever and from generation to generation to generation. The latter seems to be exegetical or explanatory of the former. The phrase forever is variously used in Scripture. Sometimes thereby is meant as long as a man lives; so is it said the servant that has his ear bored through with an awl to the door of his master should be his servant forever. Sometimes thereby is meant during the continuance of the Jewish state; so of many of the ceremonial and judicial laws, it is said that they should be statutes forever. Sometimes <thereby is meant> as long as the world stands or to the end of the generations of men; so it is said *Ecclesiastes 1:4*, “One generation passeth away and another comes but [the earth abideth for ever].” Sometimes thereby is meant to all eternity; so it is said God is “blessed forevermore,” *Romans 1:25*, and so it is said *John 6:51*, he that may “eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” *A History of the Work of Redemption (WJE Online Vol. 9)*

Romans 1:27

Taylor's commentary on the Apostle's discussion of men lusting after men cites Cicero who, "without any Mark of Disapprobation," refers to a man of high rank who practiced "this worse than beastly Vice," and also notes that other men and philosophers were "Admirers of young men." This Taylor called a "most detestable Vice" (*Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3:20–21). *The "Blank Bible" (WJE Online Vol. 24)*

Romans 1:28

That men should forsake the true God for idols, is an evidence of the most astonishing folly and stupidity, by God's own testimony. *Jeremiah 2:12–13*, "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord: for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and have hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." And that mankind in general did thus, so soon after the flood, was from the evil propensity of their hearts, and because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; as is evident by *Romans 1:28*. *Original Sin (WJE Online Vol. 3)*

Romans 1:30

To "glory" is for a person to express his high esteem of his own advantages of excellency, honor or happiness above others. The word in the text in the original signifies to show forth one's own praise, or to exalt oneself with one's own praises. Therefore boasting or glorying is generally taken in an ill sense, as an expression of a haughty disposition. Thus when the Apostle, when he is setting forth the exceeding great wickedness of the heathen, he mentions this, amongst other things, that they were "boasters" (*Romans 1:30*). Self-praise is spoken of, as by the wise man, as a foolish thing. *Proverbs 27:2*, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. *Sermons and Discourses: 1723–1729 (WJE Online Vol. 14)*

Romans 1:31

“Without natural affection.” ἄστοργη may include the absence both of parental and filial affection. The custom of exposing newborn infants, which prevailed so generally in the heathen world, and that among polite nations and persons in other respects not destitute of humanity, is a most striking instance of the truth of this assertion, as that of killing their aged parents also was of the counterpart. *The “Blank Bible” (WJE Online Vol. 24)*

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shows a dreadful prevalence of wickedness when it even overbears, and suppresses the better principles of human nature: as it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were without natural affection (*Romans 1:31*). But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, are evidences of an high degree of vice, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection, has the nature of virtue, or saving grace. *Religious Affections (WJE Online Vol. 2)*

Romans 1:32—2:1

It seems to be a mistake of many that the Apostle, in what he says of men’s wickedness in the *Romans 1*, has respect only to the Gentiles, and that in what he says in the *Romans 2*, he has respect only to the Jews. ‘Tis true that in the *Romans 1* he evidently has his eye chiefly on the wickedness that prevailed [in the Gentile] world. But that is not his professed design in it, only to describe the sin of the pagan world, but the wickedness of the world of mankind. ‘Tis all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness. And in the *Romans 2* he has his eye chiefly on the Jews, but it is not his professed design to speak only of them, as appears by his beginning in the *Romans 2:1*, the universal terms that he uses in it. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O MAN (not O Jew). WHO-SOEVER thou art (*of mankind*, whether Jew or Gentile) that judgest,” etc. In the *Romans 1:32*, the Apostle speaks of the wickedness of mankind in general, and shows how they “hold the truth in unrighteousness,” as he had said before (*Romans 1:18*). And the special design of that verse is to set forth how they are all alike, and all agreed in wickedness, and in the same kind of wickedness. Though they all have that light that is sufficient

The Power of God

to teach them that those that commit such things deserve the condemnation and wrath of God, and so death and destruction, which they are very ready to acknowledge and declare in the case of others when they see their wickedness, their unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, etc.: I say, though when they see others guilty of such things, they can easily see that they are worthy of death, and are forward to express it, yet they do the very same things, and not only so, but they show plainly that they have just such hearts. They show a full practical consent to all the wickedness of others that they are forward to condemn and to declare worthy of death. Thus unreasonable are they, and inconsistent with themselves. Thus the beginning of the *Romans 2* comes in. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest.” Thou that art forward to condemn others as worthy of death, “for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.” Thou art very unreasonable and exceeding inconsistent with thyself, “for thou that judgest dost the same things,” and showest that thou hast pleasure in their practice. There is at the same time that you judge them, a full practical consent to and good liking of the very same practices. So God of old condemned the Jews for that in their practice they had justified Samaria and Sodom, and were a comfort to ‘em, and yet had judged them (Ezekiel 16:51–52, *Ezekiel 16:54*). *The “Blank Bible” (WJE Online Vol. 24)*