

Commentary on Ephesians



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Commentary on Ephesians

Robert Rollock

Translated and introduced by
Casey B. Carmichael



REFORMATION HERITAGE BOOKS
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentary on Ephesians

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Reformation Heritage Books

2965 Leonard St., NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49525

616-977-0889

orders@heritagebooks.org

www.heritagebooks.org

Special thanks to Scott Dix, whose generous contribution made this translation possible.

Printed in the United States of America

21 22 23 24 25 26/10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Rollock, Robert, 1555?-1599, author. | Carmichael, Casey, translator, writer of introduction.

Title: Commentary on Ephesians / Robert Rollock ; translated and introduced by Casey B. Carmichael.

Other titles: In epistolam S. Pavli Apostoli ad Ephesios, Roberti Rolloci Scoti, ecclesiae Edinburgensis Ministri commentarius. English.

Description: Grand Rapids, Michigan : Reformation Heritage Books, [2021] | Series: Classic reformed theology ; volume 5 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020044996 (print) | LCCN 2020044997 (ebook) | ISBN 9781601787699 (cloth) | ISBN 9781601787705 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Ephesians—Commentaries.

Classification: LCC BS2695.53 .R6513 2021 (print) | LCC BS2695.53 (ebook) | DDC 227/.5077—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020044996>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020044997>

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This volume is dedicated to
Irena Backus
(1950–2019)

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Series Preface

There are at least three reasons why classic Reformed theology ought to be studied and thus why this series of critical English translations should exist. First, Reformed orthodoxy forms the intellectual background of modern theology which can only be understood properly in light of its reaction to and rejection of Protestant orthodoxy. Second, Reformed orthodoxy obviously merits attention by those who identify with the Reformed confession; it is their heritage and thus shapes their theology, piety, and practice whether or not they realize it. Third, despite the disdain, disregard, and distortion which Reformed orthodoxy suffered during the Enlightenments in Europe, Britain, and North America, contemporary scholarship has shown that, whatever one's view of the theology, piety, and practice of orthodoxy, on purely historical grounds it must be regarded as a vital intellectual and spiritual movement and thus a fascinating and important subject for continued study.

We call this series "Classic Reformed Theology" because, by definition, a period is classical when it defines an approach to a discipline. During the period of Protestant orthodoxy, Reformed theology reached its highest degree of definition and precision. It was then that the most important Reformed confessions were formed, and the Reformed churches took the form they have today. For these reasons, it is more than surprising to realize that much of the most important literature from this period has been almost entirely ignored since mid-eighteenth century. As difficult as it may be for those in other fields to understand, the list of scholars who have extensive, firsthand knowledge of some of the most important primary texts in the study of Reformed orthodoxy (e.g., the major works of Olevianus, Polanus, Voetius, Cocceius, Heidegger, and van Maastricht, to name but a few) can be counted easily. Further, few of the texts from this period, even some of the most important texts, have been published in modern critical editions. Thus, until recently, even those with the ability and will to read the texts from the classical period of Reformed orthodoxy could do so only with difficulty since some of these texts are difficult to locate outside of a few libraries in Europe and Great Britain. Technological developments in recent years, however, are beginning to make these works more widely available to the

academic community. Coinciding with the development of technology has been a growing interest in classic Reformed theology.

Finally, a word about the plan for this series. First, the series seeks to produce and provide critical English translations of some of the more important but generally neglected texts of the orthodox period. The series does not intend to be exhaustive, nor will it be repetitive of critical translations already available. Most of the texts appearing in this series will be translated for the first time.

Introduction

Robert Rollock lived in the second half of the sixteenth century, from 1555 to 1598. Educated at St. Andrews and subsequently professor there in philosophy, Rollock was called to Edinburgh in 1583 to start a new Scottish university in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. The next year he took a turn from philosophy to theology, from which point he taught Holy Scripture almost exclusively. He was also a preacher who reached the crowds of Edinburgh and was friendly toward King James VI. Although in his time Rollock was best known as a preacher and biblical commentator, today he is renowned as the first Scottish covenant theologian.¹

Rollock's theology was straightforward and very clearly Reformed. It is not without reason that Beza, upon reading Rollock's commentaries on Ephesians and Romans, not only praised them but offered to publish any of Rollock's works in Geneva. As mentioned above, Rollock was a covenant theologian. He wrote a

1. Andrew Woolsey, "Biographical and Historical Introduction: Robert Rollock (1555–1598); Principal, Theologian, and Preacher," in *Select Works of Robert Rollock*, ed. W. M. Gunn (1844/1849; repr., Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 1:1–24. Woolsey provides the only modern biographical sketch of Rollock. The *Select Works of Robert Rollock* also includes W. G. Gunn's translation of Henry Charteris's *Narrative of the Life and Death of Mr. Robert Rollock of Scotland* (ca. 1599), which is the biography by Rollock's successor (Woolsey, "Biographical and Historical Introduction," 1:lvii–lxxxvii. For more on the secondary scholarship on Rollock, see Breno Lucena Macedo, "The Covenant Theology of Robert Rollock" (ThM thesis, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, 2012); Aaron Clay Denlinger, introduction to Robert Rollock, *Some Questions and Answers about God's Covenant and the Sacrament That Is a Seal of God's Covenant, with Related Texts*, trans. and ed. Aaron Clay Denlinger (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2016); Brannon Ellis, "The Eternal Decree in the Incarnate Son: Robert Rollock on the Relationship between Christ and Election," in *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland: Essays on Scottish Theology, 1560–1755*, ed. Aaron Clay Denlinger (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 45–65; Andrew A. Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 512–39; Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism: 1590–1638* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); C. Harinck, *De Schotse Verbondsleer van Robert Rollock tot Thomas Boston* (Utrecht: De Banier, 1986), 21–55.

set of questions and answers on the covenant and sacraments as well as a book on effectual calling. Rollock also preached and lectured on a wide range of themes, keeping Christ at the center, including a series of fifty-six lectures on the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ that he later published. He also wrote a couple of brief treatises on justification and predestination. Rollock clearly believed in the eternal predestination of God of the elect and reprobate, the free justification of the sinner through the work of Christ, and the covenantal way that God chose to reveal Himself and relate to His people.

Once Rollock turned from philosophy to theology, he must have preached and taught through most of the books of the Bible, especially the New Testament. The first commentary he published was on Ephesians (1590 and 1593), followed by the book of Daniel (1591), Romans (1594 and 1596), 1 and 2 Thessalonians (1598), select Psalms (1599), the Gospel of John (1599), Colossians (1600), Galatians (1602), and Hebrews (1605). The posthumous publications not only speak to reader demand for Rollock's work but also reveal that he was preaching and teaching through Holy Scripture.

Rollock's commentary on Ephesians earned him the praise not only of Theodore Beza but of the wider world of Reformed communities. This commentary was Rollock's first link to Geneva and thereby to the broader international Reformed literature. Beza's praise is well known, but it is worth quoting at length:

For why should I not esteem as a treasure, and that most precious, the Commentaries of my honourable brother, Maister Rollock, upon the Epistle to the Romans and Ephesians, both of them being of special note among the writings apostolical? for so I judge them. And, I pray you, taken it to be spoken without flattery or partiality, that I never read or met with any thing in this kind of interpretation more pithily, more elegantly, and judiciously written: so as I could not contain myself, but must needs give thanks, as I ought, unto God, for this so necessary and so profitable a work, and rejoice that both you and the whole Church enjoy so great a benefit; desiring the Lord to increase with new gifts, and preserve in safety, this excellent instrument, especially in these times, wherein, through the scarcity of skillful workmen, which labour in the Lord's vineyard, and by the decease of those well exercised and experienced soldiers and worthy Christians, Sathan and his companions begin again to triumph over the truth.²

2. Theodore Beza to John Johnston, 1596, in *A Treatise on Effectual Calling in Select Works of Robert Rollock*, 1:9–12.

The reader will notice that Rollock dedicates the commentary on Ephesians to King James VI. The Reformer has been criticized for being too soft on the king, especially his tendency to enforce episcopacy on the Scottish churches. But, as Rollock makes clear in his dedication to the same king in his treatise on effectual calling, he strives both to show his devotion to the king and to be faithful to God's truth. When the occasion arises in Ephesians to address episcopacy, he disavows the king's view, arguing instead that the office of bishop is equivalent to the office of pastor.³

In these pages, Rollock speaks to today's readers as much as to his contemporaries. He speaks the word of the gospel throughout. If the gospel of Christ was not central to his teaching and preaching, then his (near) last words are meaningless: "In me there is nothing which I would not count as dung that I may win Christ: Christ is the sole ground of my comfort: all my righteousness is as filthy rags."⁴

* * * *

Robert Rollock had just preached through Ephesians in Edinburgh when he published his commentary on this epistle in 1590. That first edition was such a success that a second edition was published in Geneva in just three years (in 1593), which ensured a wide European circulation and readership. The second edition contains the same text as the 1590 commentary, only it introduced subheadings into the text for easier reading. The translation in this volume reflects the second edition and thus contains subheadings that provide signposts regarding the flow of Rollock's exegesis.

Although Rollock was a noted biblical commentator in his own day, his commentaries have been out of print and he has lost the attention he deserves. This first-ever modern translation of Rollock's commentary therefore brings to readers some of the most celebrated and best exegesis of Scripture that Reformed Scholasticism produced.

To be sure, Reformed Scholastic theologians such as Rollock emphasized logic and doctrine, but as his *Commentary on Ephesians* makes clear, they also had the sense that theology needed to be grounded in Scripture. Readers of this translation will notice that Rollock sees biblical exegesis and dogmatic formulation as tightly interwoven. It was only after Rollock that theologians began to distinguish more sharply (sometimes to the point of separation) biblical theology and systematic theology. While Rollock thus wrote a doctrinal commentary

3. W. G. Gunn, preface to *Select Works of Robert Rollock*, xxiii.

4. Woolsey, "Biographical and Historical Introduction," 1:24.

on Ephesians, he certainly did move through the text linearly and expound on every verse (even if within the context of a pericope).⁵

Some early historians of theology claimed that there were central dogmas in different examples, such as justification for Luther, predestination for Calvin, and covenant for Cocceius. In the last half century or so, this scholarship has largely been discredited as overly simplistic and out of touch with the primary sources. Rollock himself has largely been viewed only through the lenses of covenant and effectual calling, which is understandable in light of the extant translations of his works. But now that his commentary on a major Pauline epistle is appearing in English translation, readers will be able to see a fuller picture of Rollock's theology. Indeed, although Ephesians famously contains a large section on predestination, it nevertheless also touches on a wide range of topics, and our commentator shows his readiness to address them all.⁶

* * * *

The only work in the *Select Works of Robert Rollock* that its editor, W. G. Gunn, included in Latin but left untranslated is the Reformer's 1593 *On The Eternal Approval and Disapproval of the Divine Mind*. Since Ephesians is the New Testament book that has perhaps the most extended passage on predestination, it seemed appropriate to append a translation of that piece (see appendix).

Rollock published several works besides the Ephesians commentary, some of which are available to contemporary readers in English. For ease of access to the rest of Rollock's works, I include below a chronological list of his publications and the contents of the *Select Works of Robert Rollock*.

Chronological Index of Rollock's Publications

In epistolam S. Pauli apostoli ad Ephesios, Roberti Rolloci Scoti, ministri Iesu Christi in ecclesia Edinburgensi, commentarius. Edinburgh, 1590. Second edition, Geneva, 1593.

In librum Danielis prophetae, Roberti Rolloci Scoti, ministri Iesu Christi in ecclesia Edinburgensi, commentarius. Edinburgh, 1594.

De aeterna mentis divinae approbatione et improbatione, doctrina brevis, et pro natura rei tam arduae, explicata. Edinburgh, 1594.

Analysis dialectica in Pauli apostoli epistolam ad Romanos. Edinburgh, 1594.

5. On the use of Scripture and reason in Reformed Scholasticism, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:123–46.

6. On central dogma theories, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:123–46.

- Quaestiones et responsiones aliquot de foederis Dei, deque sacramento quod foederis Dei sigillum est.* Edinburgh, 1596.
- Tractatus de vocatione efficaci, quae inter locos theologiae communissimos recensetur, deque locis specialioribus, qui sub vocatione comprehenduntur.* Edinburgh, 1597.
- In epistolam Pauli apostoli ad Thessalonicenses priorem commentarius.* Edinburgh, 1598.
- In epistolam Pauli apostoli ad Thessalonicenses posteriorem commentarius.* Edinburgh, 1598.
- Analysis logica in epistolam Pauli ad Philemon.* Edinburgh, 1598.
- In evangelium domini nostri Iesu Christi secundum sanctum Iohannem commentarius.* Geneva, 1599.
- Certaine Sermons upon Severall Places of the Epistles of Paul.* Edinburgh, 1599.
- In selectos aliquot Psalmos Davidis commenatius.* Geneva, 1599.
- An Exposition upon Some Select Psalmes of David, Conteing Great Store of Most Excellent and Comfortable Doctrine, and Instruction for All Those, That under the Burthen of Sinne Thirst for Comfort in Christ Jesus.* Translated by C. Lumsden. Edinburgh, 1600.
- Analysis logica in epistolam Pauli apostoli ad Galatas.* London, 1602.
- In epistolam Sancti Pauli apostoli ad Colossenses commentarius.* Geneva, 1602.
- Lectures upon the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians.* London, 1603.
- A Treatise of Gods Effectual Calling.* Translated by H. Holland. London, 1603.
- Analysis logica in epistolam ad Hebraeos.* Edinburgh, 1605.
- Lectures upon the First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians.* Edinburgh, 1606.
- Certaine Sermons, upon Severall Texts of Scripture.* Edinburgh, 1616.
- Lectures upon the History of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.* Edinburgh, 1616.
- Five and Twentie Lectures upon the Last Sermon and Conference of Our Lord Iesus Christ, with His Disciples Immediately before His Passion: Contained in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Chapters of the Gospel of Sainct Iohn. As also upon That Most Excellent Prayer, Contained in the Seventeenth Chap. of the Same Gospel.* Edinburgh, 1619.
- Commentarius in primam beati apostoli Petri epistolam.* With appendix titled *Brevis tractatus de iustificatione.* Edinburgh, 1627. Unpublished MSS Dc. 4.68, Edinburgh University Library.

Select Works of Robert Rollock. 2 vols. Edited by W. M. Gunn. Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1844/1849. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008.

Treatise on Justification. Translated by Aaron Clay Denlinger and Noah Phillips. *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 27 (2016): 99–110.

Some Questions and Answers about God's Covenant and the Sacrament That Is a Seal of God's Covenant, with Related Texts. Translated and edited by Aaron Clay Denlinger. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016.

Contents of the *Select Works of Robert Rollock*

Volume 1

Vitae et obitus D. Roberti Rolloci, Scoti, narratio ab Henrico Charterisio conscripta

Life of Principal Rollock, by Principal Charteris (translated, with notes, by the editor, with list of Rollock's writings)

Original Title Pages of Rollock's *Tractatus de vocatione efficaci*, and of Holland's translation

The Author's Epistle to King James VI (translated by Holland)

The Printer, Robert Waldegrave, to the Reader (translated by the editor)

Beza's Letter to John Johnston (translated by Holland)

Holland's Epistle Dedicatory to Sir William Scott of Elie

Marbury to the Reader

Holland to the Reader

Rollock's Summary of Theology (translated by the editor)

Rollock's Summary, in the original Latin

A Treatise of Our Effectual Calling (translated by Holland)

Chapter 1: Outline of the Treatise

Chapter 2: Of the Word of God; Especially of the Covenant of Works

Chapter 3: Of the Covenant of Grace

Chapter 4: Who Are Comprehended in God's Covenant

Chapter 5: The Protestant and the Popish Judgment of These Covenants

Chapter 6: Of the Written Covenant of God

Chapter 7: Outline of the Various Controversies on This Subject. Is Scripture the Word of God?

Chapter 8: Evidence That the Scripture Is the Word of God, Characteristics of the Scripture with Relative Controversies

- Chapter 9: First Characteristic of the Scripture—Its Antiquity
Chapter 10: Second Characteristic—Its Perspicuity
Chapter 11: Third Characteristic—Its Simplicity
Chapter 12: Fourth Characteristic—Its Ever-Living Efficacy
Chapter 13: Fifth Characteristic—Its Indispensability
Chapter 14: Sixth Characteristic—Its Perfection
Chapter 15: Seventh Characteristic—Its Authority as a Judge of Controversies
Chapter 16: Eighth Characteristic—Its Authority as a Ground of Faith
Chapter 17: What Are the Books of Scripture
Chapter 18: The Authentic Edition of the Scripture—the Old Testament
Chapter 19: The Authentic Edition of the Scripture—the New Testament
Chapter 20: The Translations of the Old Testament
Chapter 21: The Syriac Translation of the New Testament
Chapter 22: The Latin Translations of Both Testaments
Chapter 23: The Translation of the Scripture into the Mother Tongue
Chapter 24: Sin in General
Chapter 25: Original Sin
Chapter 26: Concupiscence
Chapter 27: Actual Sin
Chapter 28: The Sin against the Holy Ghost
Chapter 29: Justifying Faith
Chapter 30: Improper Significations of Faith
Chapter 31: Popish Doctrine of Faith
Chapter 32: Hope
Chapter 33: Charity or Love
Chapter 34: Repentance
Chapter 35: The Repentance of the Reprobate
Chapter 36: Popish Doctrine of Repentance
Chapter 37: Freewill
Chapter 38: Free Grace
- Catechetical Exposition of the Modes of Revelation
Sermons
Original Title Page to Edition of 1599, Containing Eleven Sermons in the
Scottish Dialect
Address to the Christian Reader

Three Sonnetts by James Melville on Rollock's Death

Sermon 1: 2 Corinthians 5:1–4

Sermon 2: 2 Corinthians 5:1–8

Sermon 3: 2 Corinthians 5:9–11

Sermon 4: 2 Corinthians 5:12–15

Sermon 5: 2 Corinthians 5:16–18

Sermon 6: 1 Corinthians 2:6–9

Sermon 7: 1 Corinthians 2:10–12

Sermon 8: 2 Corinthians 4:3–5

Sermon 9: 2 Corinthians 10:1–5

Sermon 10: Philippians 1:18–26

Sermon 11: Titus 3:3–7

Original Title Page to Editions of 1616 and 1634, Containing Eighteen
Sermons in the English Dialect

Epistle Dedicatory to Sir William Scott of Elie

The Seven Additional Sermons:

Sermon 12: Psalm 130:1–4

Sermon 13: Psalm 130:5–8

Sermon 14: Matthew 15:21–28

Sermon 15: Luke 7:37–50

Sermon 16: John 3:6

Sermon 17: 1 Timothy 1:12–14

Sermon 18: 1 Timothy 1:14–16

*De aeterna mentis divinae approbatione et reprobatione***Volume 2**

Original Title Page

Epistle Dedicatory

1. Of the Passion of Christ

Lecture 1: In the Garden (John 18:1–6)

Lecture 2: In the Garden, Continued (John 18:7–12)

Lecture 3: In the Hall of the High Priest (John 18:13–18)

Lecture 4: In the Hall of the High Priest, Continued (John 18:19–27)

Lecture 5: Before Pontius Pilate (John 18:28–32)

Lecture 6: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 18:33–37)

- Lecture 7: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 18:38–40)
- Lecture 8: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 19:1–6)
- Lecture 9: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 19:7–9)
- Lecture 10: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 19:10, 11)
- Lecture 11: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (John 19:12–15)
- Lecture 12: Before Pontius Pilate, Continued (Matt. 27:24–26; John 19:16)
- Lecture 13: Immediately after Sentence (Matt. 27:27–32; Mark 15:16–21; Luke 23:24–31)
- Lecture 14: The Crucifixion (Matt. 27:33, 34; Mark 15:22, 23; Luke 23:32; John 19:17)
- Lecture 15: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:35–38; Mark 15:24–28; Luke 23:33–38; John 19:18–22)
- Lecture 16: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:39–44; Mark 15:29–32; Luke 23:35–38; John 19:23, 24)
- Lecture 17: The Crucifixion, Continued (Luke 23:40–42)
- Lecture 18: The Crucifixion, Continued (Luke 23:43; John 19:25–27)
- Lecture 19: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:45, 46; Mark 15:33, 34; Luke 23:44, 45)
- Lecture 20: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:46)
- Lecture 21: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:47–50; Mark 15:35–37; Luke 23:46; John 19:28–30)
- Lecture 22: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:50–54; Mark 15:37–39; Luke 23:46–48; John 19:30)
- Lecture 23: The Crucifixion, Continued (Matt. 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 23:49; John 19:31)
- Lecture 24: The Crucifixion, Continued (John 19:34–37)
- Lecture 25: Christ's Burial (Matt. 27:57; Mark 15:42, 43; Luke 23:50; John 19:38)
- Lecture 26: Christ's Burial, Continued (Mark 15:44–46; John 19:38–40)
- Lecture 27: Christ's Burial, Continued (Matt. 27:59; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53; John 19:41)

2. Of the Resurrection of Christ

- Lecture 28: Preparations and Visit of Mary Magdalene and First Company of Women (Matt. 28:1–4; Mark 16:1, 2; [Luke 24:1]; John 20:1)
- Lecture 29: First Company of Women, Continued—Mary's Report to Peter and John (Matt. 28:5; Mark 16:2–5; John 20:1, 2)

- Lecture 30: First Company of Women, Continued (Matt. 28:5–7; Mark 16:6, 7)
- Lecture 31: Their Return, and Visit of Second Company of Women (Matt. 28:8; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:1–11)
- Lecture 32: Visit of Peter and John (Luke 24:12; John 20:3–10)
- Lecture 33: First Appearance of Our Lord—to Mary (Mark 16:9; John 20:3–10)
- Lecture 34: Appearance to Mary, Continued—Mary’s Report (John 20:16–18)
- Lecture 35: Second Appearance of Our Lord—to the Other Women (Matt. 28:9, 10; Mark 16:10, 11)
- Lecture 36: Deceitful Invention of the Pharisees—Third Appearance of Our Lord—to the Disciples on the Way to Emmaus (Matt. 28:11–15; Mark 15:12; Luke 24:13–16)
- Lecture 37: Third Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:17–20)
- Lecture 38: Third Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:21–26)
- Lecture 39: Third Appearance of Our Lord, Continued—at Emmaus (Luke 24:27–32)
- Lecture 40: Fourth Appearance of Our Lord—to Peter; and Having Appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:7), Sixth Appearance—to Ten Apostles (Mark 16:13, 14; Luke 24:33–36; John 20:19)
- Lecture 41: Sixth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:37–41; John 20:20)
- Lecture 42: Sixth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:41–46)
- Lecture 43: Sixth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:47)
- Lecture 44: Sixth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (Luke 24:48, 49)
- Lecture 45: Sixth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (John 20:21–23)
- Lecture 46: Seventh Appearance of Our Lord—to the Eleven, including Thomas (John 20:24–26)
- Lecture 47: Seventh Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (John 20:27–31)
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- Lecture 50: Eighth Appearance of Our Lord, Continued (John 21:15–17)
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- Lecture 53: Ninth Appearance of Our Lord—to More than Five Hundred at Once (1 Cor. 15:6; Matt. 28:16–19; Mark 16:15)

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3. Of the Ascension of Christ

Lecture 55: Christ Leads out His Disciples from Jerusalem, and Ascends into Heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50–52; Acts 1:6–10)

Lecture 56: The Return of the Disciples to Jerusalem (Mark 15:20; Luke 24:52, 53; Acts 1:10–14)

Translation Conventions

No modern, critical edition of Rollock's Latin text exists to date. Therefore, I had to not only translate sixteenth-century Latin into twenty-first-century American English but also adapt sixteenth-century publishing customs to twenty-first-century conventions. The most obvious accommodation was to update punctuation, which included breaking long sentences into shorter ones. I translated from the second edition of Rollock's commentary on Ephesians: *In Epistolam S. Pauli ad Ephesios, Roberti Rolloci Scoti, ecclesiae Edinburgensis ministri, commentarius* (Geneva: Franciscus le Preux, 1593).

As a biblical commentator, Rollock provided his own Latin translation of the original Greek text, which was likely influenced by Beza's translation. I offered original translations of Rollock's renderings. So that the biblical text may stand out, I have preserved it in italics, as it appeared in the original. Where Rollock inserted Greek words and phrases into the main body of his commentary, I preserved the original; in cases where he immediately explained the meaning of the Greek, I left it as is, but where he did not do so, I offered an English translation followed by the Greek set in parentheses.

Commentary on Ephesians

Dedication to King James

To the Most Illustrious and Powerful Ruler and Lord,
James VI, King of Scots,
Grace and Peace from the Lord

The same thing that led me to write this commentary, most illustrious king, truly moved me to dedicate it to your name. Conscious of my zeal toward my God and His glory, which alone (indeed, as far as it was possible by my weakness) I held before my eyes in this whole matter, I dared to bring to light those things that I wrote which were nevertheless quite ordinary. For in this way I thought that it would be the case that, if some arguments of this mind of mine should exist in this commentary, some that surely appear to the reader, which, among many other things, I confess, are also glaring proofs of our weakness. And yet men with a more impartial mind discuss those things that I have not explained with learning and eloquence. Believe me, most illustrious king, the same conscience of the love of a faithful servant toward his ruler and lord caused me to dare to dedicate to your majesty what I nevertheless understood as unworthy of such patronage. For, supported by this consciousness, I persuaded myself that it would be the case that, if some proof of my very reverent devotion toward your majesty was made known, what was advanced by a devout and faithful servant may also be pleasing in some way. Receive, therefore, not so much the commentary as the indication of the most humble duty that I owe to my ruler. And may you be illumined by the grace of God, in order that you may plunge yourself deeper into the misery of man and the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and all spiritual blessings, which you will find gloriously preached in this epistle to the Ephesians as I have. For I labored in this with all my might, according to my custom, in explaining the epistle, so that, in the presence of the Spirit of God, I would certainly arrive at some part of that sense of our common misery, but especially of the grace in Christ Jesus, in which I see that the apostle was deeply absorbed. Those who do not seek this but only superficially stick to what is taken by itself do not seem to understand the true fruit from the writings of the prophets and apostles. I, a wretched man, hear Paul so gravely declaring that we are all dead

in our trespasses and sins, but never satisfying himself in preaching the mercy of God in Christ, by which He made us who were dead alive in Him, raised us, and seated us in heaven. I also hear him not getting enough of preaching the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and the wonderful greatness of His power in us who believe, and explaining other things of this kind, many of which occur here and there in this epistle. Will I, a wretched man, hear those things and yet not be moved by these matters in any way, like Paul was, understanding neither pain from so great a death nor pleasure from so great a life? I think that surely there is no more serious curse than when someone understands some true teaching and is also not entangled in any error, yet does not truly understand it in his heart. This happens because he does not agree with the truth recognized, or he does not apply it to himself by true faith in God and in the Mediator. For the prophet said that all knowledge is not true—not in regard to the Spirit, who gives life, but to the letter, which only kills. You hear, he says, but while hearing you do not understand. You see, and while seeing you do not know. Therefore, who is the person who does not see that not only all other people but especially kings should not be content with the knowledge of the divine word, unless they understand it deep within their hearts? Certainly this knowledge alone can sanctify the human heart, not only for other duties but also to faithfully execute the office of kings above all. Moreover, it alone can provide greater and truer pleasure than all the kingdoms and empires of this world. May the Lord Jesus grant you to grow more and more as the days go on, especially in the sincere understanding of divine grace in Christ Jesus. And in this way may you have the true comfort of the Scriptures, which will sustain your soul in the many cares and troubles with which it is certainly necessary that you be burdened, especially as the mightiest of all men. Amen.

Your indebted servant,

Robert Rollock
Edinburgh, October 1, 1590

The Argument of the Epistle

Ephesus was the most distinguished city of Ionia, or, as Herodotus says, of Lydia,¹ distinguished for the very famous temple of Diana and devotee of the great Diana (Acts 19:33–34),² founded by the Amazons. On Paul’s first arrival in this city, see Acts 18:19. On his return to it, see Acts 19:1. On the entire three-year period in which he remained in it, see Acts 20:31. After Paul had already taught the Ephesians with his living voice, in that two-year period in which he remained at Rome in their service, he wrote to them from prison. He sent this epistle through Tychicus, to strengthen them in the doctrine of the truth that they had already received. In it Paul, having first greeted the Ephesians, begins to preach about the spiritual blessings of God in Christ, set forth first in a general discourse, then in a particular introduction of the blessings. He generally follows this very natural approach and order. But more than once, not forgetting that he is a pastor, Paul applies several parts of the general blessing to both the Jews and the Ephesians—namely, calling and vivification. At one point, he also inserts a passage on the activity of the soul and goodwill. After the general teaching about spiritual blessings, Paul descends to the particulars and more extensively treats the calling of the Ephesians, which he had already touched on, as far as it applied in the general teaching. It is set forth comparatively first, then strengthened with several arguments; that is, it is also explained with a natural approach. But after he first taught the Ephesians in this way in general, he next taught them in particular, lest the present condition of the person teaching hinder the work of edification. Having first explained the reason for his imprisonment, he exhorts them not to slow down because of his afflictions. So that the enclosing of the exhortation may affect them to an even greater extent, Paul digresses to the passage on the activity of the soul and goodwill. The doctrine was firmly conveyed in those three parts—the doctrine

1 See Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.26 and 1.142.

2 Diana is the Roman form of the Greek goddess Artemis—goddess of hunting, women, etc. See Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Artemis,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 182–84; and R. H. Robins and John Scheid, “Diana,” in Hornblower and Spawforth, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 463.

of the blessings, the calling of the Ephesians, the removing of the scandal of the cross. They can fall under the general part of the epistle, which we have nevertheless considered separately in explaining the epistle to the people, for the sake of effective teaching. And so the doctrine and didactic part of the epistle having been conveyed, the hortatory part of the epistle follows. In this part Paul exhorts the Ephesians to good works, preserving the natural method, set forth first in the most general exhortation to every duty worthy of the calling of the Christian, then in introducing particular precepts and duties. In the first place he expresses the particular precepts and duties that pertain to every condition of people, without distinction. In the second place, he treats those that regard some specific conditions of people, such as those of husbands and wives, parents and children, et cetera. Finally, and as a conclusion, as it were, after adding a general exhortation on the duties to all superiors, he exhorts them to strengthen themselves, or to put on the full spiritual armor. But, in introducing these particular admonitions, who will demand an exact and precise order? But, having conveyed these two parts of the epistle, he addresses the particular issue of ownership, it seems. He indicates that he had entrusted his possessions, about which the Ephesians wanted to become more certain, to Tychicus, brother and minister, before he had written the epistle. Finally, leaving the account of his possessions, what was left but to close the epistle with the same greeting, or certainly not very different, with which he opened it, and to wish the grace of God in Christ, not only to the Ephesians but also to all who love our Lord Christ. To Him be all honor and glory. Amen.

Letter to the Reader

The Publisher
To the Devout Christian Reader

The Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians of Robert Rollock—minister of the church at Edinburgh—was commended to us by praiseworthy men, because of its brief and clear explanation of the text that entirely agrees with the analogy of orthodox faith, and because, in the whole treatise supreme modesty and sincerity was exceedingly well suited to the matters themselves. We considered a new edition, not only on account of the lack of copies in the British Isles but also to present to faithful pastors of German, Swiss, French, and Dutch churches. While we were entertaining this idea, a certain student of theology opportunely supplied us with marginal notes for the same commentary, which added the arrangement of the holy apostle and expositor, primarily for the ease of the readers. Just as this has pleased us, we are confident that it will be useful to you too. For that reason, having faithfully followed the Edinburgh edition, we carefully added these notes, together with a twofold index, so that you would not lack anything. See, therefore, that you take up with your right hand what we have put forth with a sincere heart, and turn it to your use and the edification of others. Farewell.

Synopsis of the Six Chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Parts of Chapter 1

1. The apostle's greeting (vv. 1–2)
2. The theme, on the blessing of God the Father in Christ (v. 3)
3. The declaration of the theme (vv. 4–14)
4. A digression on the joy of the apostle on account of the faith and love of the Ephesians (vv. 15–18)
5. Return to the declaration of the theme and the introduction of particular blessings (vv. 19–23)

Parts of Chapter 2

1. The application of the excellent greatness of the power of God, which speaks about vivification for the Gentiles as equally as for the Jews (vv. 1–10)
2. The second part of the epistle on spiritual blessings and general doctrine having been conveyed, the third part of the epistle descends to the particulars and sets forth the former condition of the Ephesians under Gentilism as well as the later one under Christianity (vv. 11–13)
3. The confirmation of that later condition (vv. 14–22)

Parts of Chapter 3

1. Seizing the occasion from the last words of the chapter above, the fourth part of the epistle contained in this chapter comes to the offense of his cross and the exhortation that they do not slow down on account of his afflictions for them (vv. 1–13)
2. A digression on his prayer for the Ephesians (vv. 14–21)

Parts of Chapter 4

1. In this fifth part of the epistle, which contains precepts for the Christian life, having first exhorted the godly to every duty worthy of the calling of a Christian, he then descends to particular duties (vv. 1–6)
2. He digresses to show the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit (vv. 7–16)
3. He returns to giving particular precepts (vv. 17–32)

Parts of Chapter 5

1. Particular precepts of duty, which apply to people in every condition (vv. 1–21)
2. He turns to precepts that regard some specific conditions of people, but above all spouses (vv. 22–33)

Parts of Chapter 6

1. He continues with particular precepts that pertain to specific conditions of people, the duty of parents and children, masters and slaves (vv. 1–9)
2. Concluding the whole epistle, he adds a passage that gives to all in common a certain general precept about putting on the whole armor of God (vv. 10–20)
3. In the sixth part of the epistle, he says that his possessions will be explained by Tychicus (vv. 21–22)
4. In the final part, he closes the epistle with a certain greeting, in which he prays a blessing not only for the Ephesians but also for the whole church (vv. 23–24)

Chapter 1

Argument

There are five parts of the first chapter:

1. The greeting (vv. 1–2)
2. The proposition (v. 3)
3. The declaration of the proposition (vv. 4–14)
4. Digression to a passage on good will (vv. 15–18)
5. Return to the declaration of the proposition, and introduction of particular blessings (vv. 19–23)

CHAPTER 1

¹Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints who live in Ephesus, and to the faithful ones in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The Greeting—The First Part of the Chapter

“Paul, an apostle.” The first part of the epistle and of this chapter is the greeting in the first two verses. This is to be explained by the fact that it is common to nearly all the epistles of Paul, and what is very often explained from this passage we will not dwell on at this time, hastening to the argument itself.

Three Things Are Considered in This

There are three aspects of the greeting.

1. The Person Greeting Is Paul the Apostle

The person greeting is Paul, who is described by the calling and office of an apostle. The office of apostle is explained by its founders, first by Christ, by whose authority he executes it. Then it is explained by God the Father, by whose will he executes it with that delegated authority. Therefore, he serves in the office of apostle for Christ the Son by the will of God the Father.

2. The Person Greeted Is the Ephesian Church

The person being greeted is the Ephesian church, of which we have a certain description from the holiness belonging to the church of God, from the place mentioned, Ephesus, about which we spoke in the argument, and finally from their faith in Christ, from which that holiness proceeds. For by faith in Christ Jesus we are cleansed and sanctified.

3. The Goods Which the One Greeting Wishes to the One Being Greeted

“Grace.” The goods that the person greeting wishes to the person being greeted are first, grace, as the cause of peace and happiness, then peace, as the effect of grace. For what is pleasing to us, which we do both prosperously and happily, is from the grace of God, not any merit of our own. For it is the grace of God by which He is undeservedly favorable toward us, which indeed excludes all merit (Rom. 11:6).

“Peace.” But peace is the prosperous and happy success of all things, a peaceful and quiet life. He wants these goods for the Ephesians to be derived from their founders (namely, God the Father), who, effecting, is first in rank, who effects in the second place. We will discuss this matter later.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven in Christ.

II. The Proposition—The Second Part of the Chapter

“Blessed.” The second part of the chapter and the chief proposition of the second part of the epistle is the sentence “God the Father of Jesus Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven in Christ.”

What Occurs in It

In this proposition we see two things introduced by Paul: first, the form by which he sets it forth, and second, its matter and substance.

1. The Form of the Blessing That Proceeds from the Sense of Our Misery and God's Mercy

And the form of this way of proceeding exists partly from acknowledgment of our misery and partly from the acknowledgment of the mercy and free benefits of God. For when we are moved and cast down by an awareness of our own misery and are again stirred up by reflection on gracious redemption, we are forced to break out into praise for the grace of God. In Romans 7:24ff, Paul leaves us an illustrious example of this matter in his own person. For there, first, he is so moved by a sense of the imperfection of his nature that he cries out, "wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" and then he collects and revives himself in the remembrance of God's mercy in Christ. Finally, from this twofold knowledge the voice exists for giving thanks to God. "I give thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And shortly after that, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

From This the Distinction between the Regenerate and the Reprobate Proceeds

From this we learn how the regenerate differ from the unregenerate. The regenerate never think or speak about the benefits of God or become sharers of them without praising God continually, and they enjoy His free benefits for the end that He set forth—namely, the commendation of grace and the glory of God. But the unregenerate, although they may boast about the abundance of God's benefits, it is nevertheless so absent that they praise Him on account of these things that they abuse them as much as they can, to the dishonor of the divine name. So far about the form of the proposition.

2. The Matter, in Which Three Things Occur

In what follows we will speak about the matter of the proposition. For the sake of teaching on the matter, we distinguish these three things: (a) the blessing itself, set forth in general; (b) who has blessed; and (c) in whom He has blessed.

a. First, the Blessing

Therefore, first the blessing itself occurs in these words: "He has blessed us." Having already set forth this blessing in general, he later makes it clear by the introduction of its parts.

And It Is Indeed Spiritual

First, he calls it spiritual, then, more clearly explaining the very thing imparted, he adds what follows—"in heaven"—so that heavenly does not at all differ from spiritual.