

Jer.19:15); in two other cases it speaks of "hardening one's heart" (Ps.95:8; Prov.28:14); once it says, "Who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?" (Job.9:4); in seven cases the reference is to stiffening one's neck, or to being stiff-necked. *σκληρύνω* is used in the LXX 31 times. In seventeen instances its object is *καρδίαν*. Eight times it is *τράχηλον*. Once it is reflexive, and once its object is *πνεύμα*. Is it necessary to pile up further argument to show that Paul uses the word with a definitely metaphysical or psychological intent, that it does not refer to external circumstances (as to treat harshly) nor to a mere permission to go on in the way one is going, but indicates a specific action of God upon the spirit of man, rendering him obstinate, or antagonistic to righteousness and truth. Souter well states it as, "make unyielding". Paul ~~maintains~~ in this verse maintains God's absolute liberty to have mercy upon, or to render obstinate *ὃν θέλει*.

v.19. *Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν* Paul has concluded his first argument in support of the right of God to elect whom He will, regardless of human merit, or racial claim to His favor. On the solid rock of the divine statement he has shown that God claims this right. But he sees that this argument even will not convince everyone. Some will wish to question even the principle which God Himself has enunciated, on the basis of philosophy, and to subject the matter to the puny tests of finite human reason. In his usual manner, he puts the objection in the words of the one objecting. But he departs from his more usual introductory phrase, *τί οὖν ερωθόμεν*, as if to identify himself less with such an objection as this. *τί ἔτι κ.τ.λ.* --further question of the