


INTO HIS IMAGE

DEVOTIONAL READINGS FROM ROMANS

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

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ROMANS 1

WE CAN NEVER BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

In AD 57 Rome had a new boss, the emperor **Nero**. *Burrhus* led Rome's armed forces and *Seneca* was its moral leader. Within a year of Phoebe arriving with this letter Nero emerged from petticoat rule eventually to poison the great and good. He erected a 120 foot gilt statue of himself.

Paul terms himself a bond slave of Christ Jesus (Ironsides understands a holy likeness to the "heavenly man" & His ministry to be entailed) Paul is **an envoy** [Greek *αποστολος κλητος* "called and sent"] of Christ – is **"mortgaged"** [Greek *αφωρισμενος*] to the gospel. God **"leaked"** or **"canvassed"** [*προεπιαγγελλω*] the gospel in the prophets (*Paul has 52 references to them in Romans, 27 of which are to Isaiah.*) Paul is indefatigable; he thrills to be Christ's envoy.

The gospel itself is the subject matter of the letter – presenting the "horizoned Son" [Greek *ορισθεντος* "a spiritual sun on the world horizon"] and "power" beyond that seen or known [Greek *δυναμις* "power which can rise to any required challenge"] in the resurrection of Jesus who is truly "human" and "the seed of David." *This opening ambit gives ample evidence of its power in the first century and the history of the church to date complements that evidence.*

The apostle is worthy of *Chrysostom's* words *the great herald of the truth, the hero of the church, the heavenly man*. In the light of the dedication of Roman Christians he is more than content to be counted a "slave of Christ" and he "begs" of God in a request to which he binds himself. Just 3 years before Paul wrote, *Narcissus*, (c.f. 16.11) Caesar's leading slave – suffered martyrdom. His household stayed resolute in the faith. Slaves found work as makers of sulphur matches, clothes salesmen, sellers of glass and cement miners. Claudius erected a

memorial tablet that read," Narcissus-in memory of his wife Dikaiosune" Also in AD 57 *Pomponia Graekina*, the wife of *Aulus Plautus*-hero of the AD 43 British campaign was acquitted of "Foreign Superstition" (adherence to the faith of Christ).

The British king Caractacus and his wife Claudia were known Christians who were exiled to Rome in the wake of the British defeat. They were given a stately residence by the Roman Senate and Paul's reference to Claudia in 2 Timothy 4.21 may show that he was in contact with that family. Paul I s not ashamed to remain permanently under the "opprobrium"[Greek επιαισχυνομαι is used for continuing shame in respect of something specific] of the gospel as he discharges his debt. He holds fiercely to the principle of Habakkuk 2.4 "My" just man יָקִידָךְ [The Hebrew has a "possessive" because God acknowledges the righteousness he alone can gift] shall live my life חַיִּי [i.e. a second "possessive" meaning "to share the divine nature"] by faith that is in me יְיָ מִמָּנָה [i.e. a third "possessive" meaning faith-cum-faithfulness uniquely gifted by God].

In the Talmud Jews argue over Amos 5.4 "Seek me and you will live". The first said," Perhaps that means the Torah"; the second said, "No, Habakkuk comes after Amos and reduces the Torah to one word" Hab.2.4. That word is "faith".

**I'm not ashamed to own "my" Lord
Or to defend His cause
Maintain the glory of His cross
And honour all His laws
[The true beauty & glory of the Christian faith is that
it is intensely personal]**

ROMANS 2

**In my heart there rings a melody
There rings a melody
In my heart there rings a melody
There rings a melody of Love
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus sweetest name I know
Fills my every longing**

Keeps me singing as I go.

Paul teaches the universal and totally invasive nature of sin which corrupting man's whole nature

THE FINDING OF SCRIPTURE: MAN IS SUBJECT TO SIN AND DEATH 1-6

(a) Defenceless-we have no alibi for sin 1-2 A dismal sameness unites our race

Paul presents human depravity in the stark reality of the *Hans Anderson* fairy tale-*The Emperor's new clothes* which in the public eye bring shame to us as to that foolish king. All are not "senseless faithless heartless ruthless" (*Romans 1.31*) but corruption is in every stratum of our nature; no-one has a personal defence [*Greek απολογία*] or moves "against the stream" [*Greek ανα*] of universal sinfulness. **To accuse people as different is to condemn oneself as similar in sinful action.** But point a finger and three fingers point back critically at oneself. God's judgment runs against one hundred sins and their like [*Greek τοιαυτα*] that Paul lists in the first chapter as he quotes from 8 separate O.T. Contexts.

You who do these things (ποιειν) "sin as a work of art"... ποιεω (i.e. not calling sin, "sin".) Once *Winston Churchill* re-named "lies" "verbal inexactitude". Paul spells it out in economic terms, "have you calculated the accrued interest or cost?" [*Greek λογιζω*...] "you can't dart out of God's tribunal." The critic has no ultimate bolt-hole

Paul counters human pride and presumption. **"Think not to presume on the open treasury of God's 'beautiful giving'" [*Greek χρηστοτητος*]; on the hospitality of His 'armistice' [*Greek ανοχης*—a word also used by *Sapphacles* of 'the constancy of the nightingale']** **By sinning we treasure up wrath.**

Paul predicts an *οργη* of divine wrath for divine justice is reciprocal.. This word was a stark warning to Roman soldiers who were substantially into Mithraism with its orgies. Judgment will be a curtain raiser and crisis to halt the fever of sinful pursuits.

Ancient pagans thought the offering of 100 oxen in a lifetime to God fulfilled righteousness. For the Jew 70 Passover lambs over as many

years and other offerings were requisite. Jesus highlighted the true work God would discover in man is the “work of faith” cf. John 6.29 **HIC EST LABOR DEI –CREDERE** (Latin for ‘This is the work of God – that you should believe’)

When Paul talks about ‘those who do good’ [*Greek ποιηται*] v13 he is speaking about those doing “inspired deeds” as ‘inspired poets’ write inspired poetry. Only the indwelling Holy Spirit can change hearts and inspire Christ-like thoughts and words and deeds. James in his epistle (1.22) makes exactly this point when he contrasts ‘pupils of the law’ with ‘saints inspired with God’s works of faith’. So **“When gentiles “do under inspiration” those good deeds through the divinely implanted nature they demonstrate (a) law written on their hearts.**

You, who are a Jew, look at yourself Like *Homex* playing fun with the word “ceramic” the new Greek word for “mud” Paul holds the epithet “Praise” *hdu hy* up before the Jew. Paul then cites several of the commandments including No.8 on theft which links to the incident in *Josephus Antiquities`18.81ff* when Tiberius expelled four Jews from Rome for stealing money that a noble Roman lady proselyte gifted to the Jerusalem temple. Paul shows that his own religious people has no basis for boasting. God has one category for all men-the category of “sinful”. Men are far removed from God and that appears stark in their actions.

**My sin O the bliss of that glorious thought
My sin not in part but the whole
Is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul.**

ROMANS 3

DEVOTED TO REDEMPTION AND THE REDEEMER

The world before Noah became violent. Sodom was marked for its gross sin. Israel's bondage in Egypt was bitter. All these were judged. Sin abounds again today. Paul accumulates statements from the scriptures to show that man is corrupt in all areas of his being and in chapters 3-4 he shows that sin is universal. Will God not mark the third millennium AD with judgement? Of course – and with mercy – and that ere long!

The famous Methodist preacher *W.E.Sangster* called our weakness “Inertia of nature” due to unsubdued sin. There is not a heartbeat [*Greek*

διαστολη-used of the opening of the heart valve] of difference between man and man Romans 3.23. Every heart is 'open ' to sin but conversely potentially open also to Christ. The old objections that Paul combated resurface today – "But I have a bible – I'm not too bad", "I'm sceptical about all that religious stuff", "I think God will forgive me; I don't think I need this change or conversion" I was taught it all as a child". This rag-bag of moralism won't pass for redemption. These are the four classic Antinomian poses raised to avoid coming to grips with the cross. Only the cross like the tree that Moses cast in the bitter waters can sweeten life and end depressive grumbling (*cf. Exodus 15.25*) .**What must I do? Answer...'Deny yourself and all you plan-take up the cross and follow His way of sacrifice and forgiveness' Mark 8.34** Be well aware that sin has a habit of taking over your whole life. That tendency is well portrayed in the old Arab story. A Bedouin gentleman sat in his comfortable tent. His camel nosed in the flap as if asking for headroom. The Bedouin consented." My shoulders are cold "the camel seemed to say. He was given more space. He mildly pleaded "My rump is getting cold", gaining more ground. Night had suddenly fallen in the desert and the camel pleaded, "my legs are shivering with cold" When the master agreed to the request that the legs come in the uncomfortable beast said," You had better leave. The tent is too small for the two of us".

Alexander Whyte (*The needle and thread preacher*) was walking in the pass of Killiecrankie with a friend.' Sin' of all subjects was their theme. Mention was made of **Henry Drummond**. "Trouble with Henry" Whyte remarked "Is that he doesna ken onything about sin". To *Alexander Whyte* sin was 'Yon long lank lean bellied hound making up on ye." To this Jesus is the only answer.

**There is a name I love to hear
I love to speak its worth
It sounds like music in my ear
The sweetest name on earth.**

ROMANS 4

ABRAHAM WHO LOOKED TO THE HEAVENS WAS DEVOTED TO THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

As a boy I joined the "Golden Star Brigade" run by the *Baxters* who were the proprietors of the "Christian Herald"- a Christian periodical

that emphasized the “imminent return of our Lord”. My appetite for prophetic studies began early and today it is my desire that the “morning star” rises in every Christian heart as we look for the Parousia of Christ. Jesus said “Abraham rejoiced to see my day”. It is Paul who asks “What did Abraham discover?” Discoveries take various forms. Some are scientific-about the world at our feet or above our heads. Others have to do with personal experience – our own body or soul. Still others respect our relationships. What Paul tells us is that **Abraham found he could not boast of his deeds before God**. Gods blessing, righteousness promises and our life are gifts of God.

So it is axiomatic that good living even to the extent of endeavouring to keep the 10 commandments cannot abolish judgment of our sin or open the door of heaven to any man. Paul takes us FOUR times to Genesis 15. First v3 before we meet forgiven David.

NAPOLEON'S MARSHAL

There was a sad case of an officer totally devoted to *Napoleon* – who was mortally wounded and called for the emperor. "Save me, Napoleon, Save me" he cried. Napoleon shook his head and turned away. The extreme sadness of not finding out in time that one needs to be saved by the blood of the cross to be right with God is of parallel gravity.

1. OUR FIRST VISIT TO GENESIS 15 BETWEEN THE EVENINGS-SHOULD REFRESH THE SOUL Romans 4.3

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness Paul takes us back in v.9 to Abraham viewing the skies and shows how God stirred faith in Abraham. It was a special time-the same time as the Passover was slain-Exodus 12.6 "At twilight". The reason is very great for the creator and redeemer of man on that occasion gave Abraham a vast vision of the future. From one child born in the line of Abraham God would develop believers in number as many as the stars of heaven. God called Abraham out when the sun had sunk in the west and the last rays still shone and the evening star stood alone. As the patriarch stood on that star was joined by a multitude of shimmering stars that lit up the heavens. God fired up Abraham's faith by promising him that at 100 he would have a son. His wife who was 99 laughed at the thought. Can God do impossible things for men and women? Abraham learns by joyful experience to believe that God is the “life-giver”. On a third

occasion God took Abraham to Mount Moriah and told him to offer his son. As he raised the knife to sacrifice Isaac a voice from heaven prevented him. Abraham was then shown a “substitute sacrifice”- a ram entangled nearby. Abraham had discovered that God would Himself provide a sacrifice as He did on that very mountain when Jesus died at Calvary. Abraham’s faith in God’s loving provision was quickened to a flame. God showed by His desire for an eternal friendship with Abraham and by life-giving and by His plan for a future substitute to did for man’s sin that His blessing and salvation came to those who like Abraham believe in the one He promised-namely Christ.

**He took my sins and my sorrows
And He made them His very own
He bore the burden to Calvary
And suffered and died alone
How marvellous O how wonderful
And my song shall ever be
How marvellous O how wonderful
Is my Saviour’s love for me.**

ROMANS 5

**DEVOTED TO ONE WHO TOOK MY SIN-TO THE DEAR
DYING LAMB OF GOD WHO ROSE VICTORIOUS AND IS
EVER GLORIOUS**

As believers we can say heaven is in view and the benefits of its throne are now ours. Paul, accustomed as he is to shipwreck, pictures the state of man as adrift from God and approaching the rocks of death and judgment. But gradually a landing platform like Ostium appears in a scene of great peace. We have an access route to a Holy God through Christ’s atoning death. Cf. Eph.2.18 – Miletus harbour. *προσαγωγή*.

Queen Esther bravely approached *Xerxes* to plead for her Jewish people. In this chapter Paul tells us that one of the main “spin-offs” of being a Christian or being “justified” as he calls it is that we have “access to God” in prayer through Christ. Not only so but we may boast of being assured of heaven by His grace. Further to that “we boast in pressure” The Greek words for ‘pressure’ *θλιψις* and *τριβω* speak of a ‘millstone’ – the millstone of trouble refines us. Our trials yield the pure silver of a tested faith full of patience experience hope and love.

The Greek term for “access” is **προσαγωγή** (“gaining favour for a petition”) – God has stretched out His sceptre towards us – we may enter His throne room anytime anywhere: our standing is better even than that of Esther under Xerxes we may boast that we are sure of His heaven by grace. Cf. Esther 5.2.

NO.2 WE BOAST IN TRIBULATION - THE KINGS MILLSTONES v3

The Greek words for 'pressure' **θλιψις** and **τριβω** speak of a 'millstone' – the millstone of trouble refines us. God is refining our life cf. China's "Heavenly man" – evangelist Hun hiding in bushes in Hubei in sub-zero temperatures. Trial yields the pure silver of a tested faith full of patience experience hope and love

Most of all we boast in God and His Christ. Adam who gives some impression of Christ as Lord of creation is through his sin contrasted with Christ. We could say however that Adam was wounded for his bride who failed him – as he failed her. Christ was wounded for us – but the difference is He never fails. Christ's righteousness [*Greek δικαιομα 'amendment' or 'act of righting' – cf. the cross*] contrasts with Adam's condemnation [*Greek κατακριμα used by Herodotus Xenophanon & Josephus of "death sentence"*] Christ's free gift [*Greek δωρημα – a gift of privilege benefit and free grace*] with Adam's transgression [*Greek παραπτωμα – of a 'false step' 'going off the road'*]. We have 'exchanged' [*Reconciliation καταλλαγη Demosthenes – used the term both of "exchange" and "interest" on exchange*] enmity for friendship and Christ as added interest..

“Let us have peace” (5.1) Wholeness is bound up with faith. This engrossing expression “Now being justified by faith we have peace/*let us have peace*” imbues the entire epistle. Let us hold to the peace terms. The Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Bezae MSS read “let us have” from **ερχομαι** – meaning “let us now enjoy or operate on these terms – as in marriage we say, “to have & hold from this day forward.”

A RETIRED SEAMAN SAM DUNCAN'NON –PAINTS THE MESSAGE IN OILS

A retired seaman named Sam Duncannon painted his *Niagara* in oils and hung his painting as a testimony to the perpetual supplies of God's

grace in the little mission hall where he was converted—on the portrait he inscribed the lines

**Have you of His grace received
Still there's more to follow
Have you on His name believed
Still there's more to follow**

ROMANS 6

DEVOTED TO THE HOLY WAR BATTLING SATAN AND LIVING FOR JESUS

BAPTISM

We may strongly argue for one or other mode of baptism—but *εν χριστω* baptism basically involves “life change”—a dying and burial of the old life principle of “self” leading to the raising up of the new man in Christ’s likeness—the regenerated believer. For our Lord to say “I have a baptism” meant a deep massive change for which He was prepared from before the foundation of the world. When garments were “dipped” it was in order to change their colour – so that a new colour invaded every fibre of their texture. We need as never before to avoid *Rasputinism*—living like the Russian monk and debauched seducer and alcoholic. For him “exhausted desire” was holiness. This is the world’s way., it belittles scriptural holiness.

GROWTH

Paul speaks next of natural growth [*Greek φυσις*] and of sprouting. [*Greek καινοτητι*—“a blossoming” “flourishing” and “fresh colours” typical of springtime in field and garden]. Five times in vv.4-11 he says it is “spring time life” using one or other of these Greek words *ζωης συνζησομεν εν ζωπας*. Our eternal life is life at its best. It is spring like life. Our life models the “Second Adam”—a new cultivation of beauty and character and power of life is on offer. *FF Bruce* has it “The old man is fenced off” (by the palisade of the cross). So what has happened at the cross is intended to bring in a **new creation.**

**God harden me against myself
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease and rest and joys
Myself arch traitor to myself—
My hollowest friend—my deadliest foe—
My clog whatever road I go.**

VICTORY

Our king has power enough! – consider His strength. The “holy or holiness war” is now being waged in our lives. We have “placed ourselves alongside” the Saviour. We are not mercenaries—we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit—the “weapons” of our warfare are not carnal but God’s sword and shield and the whole armoury of the Spirit. We are no longer victims of the sirens of “desire” [*Greek επιθυμια* “rushing to objects of desire”]. “When the first desire after God arises in your soul give all your heart to it— it is God’s magnet to draw you from the claims of material things toward heaven”(William Law). We gladly yield our members as instruments of righteousness to God”(Romans 6.13).

OBEDIENCE

The four “serves” *υπακουω* here speak of such serving as constantly stands ready out of love for Christ and remains at the ready to serve lifelong v.17. Ours is a commitment parallel to that devotion of the servant in Exodus 21.6 who was forever bound to his master’s door by the symbolic act of the piercing awl. Our members are sworn to a holy purpose. Paul refers to the “original model” [*Greek τυπος* namely “that which is hammered out”] of Jesus’ doctrine here – the four references to truth taught earlier are to John 14.19 “If I live you live”(we live in Him v.8), Matthew 16.31 (*Christ dies no more* v.9) “The Son must die and ‘rise again’”; John 14-16 “by Christ came grace and truth”(but under grace v.15); John 8.34 Sinners serve sin (*you were servants of sin* v.17.)

FRUITFULNESS

Israel will be ashamed of her ways with Sodom’s & Samaria’s children (*Ezekiel*16.61). Roman believers now do not seek *fish and salt* i.e. “wages” as a priority—but their mission is “souls for Jesus” – evidence of real life-style change. The choicest gift of God is holiness. “If we regard sinless perfection as heresy we regard contentment with sinful imperfection as greater heresy”(A J Gordon)

Take time to be holy speak oft with thy Lord

Abide in Him always and feed on His Word.

Make friends of God’s children help those who are weak;

Forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.

ROMANS 7

DEVOTED TO CHRIST AND THE ONE WHO SHED HIS LIFEBLOOD FOR ME ON THE CROSS.

As long as the husband lived any negotiated union contracted by a wife against her husband's wish with a third party whatever financial or desirable benefits it might present was adultery in Jewish law. Conversely after his death the wife was free. Equally the law's letter lost its power over believers because Christ's death satisfied its demands; the claims of the letter of the ceremonial and sacrificial law are met at the cross. Away with *scribal teaching* and in with *Christ's doctrine* – says Paul, himself once an ardent Pharisee. Paul felt the pain & hurt [*Greek παθηματα*] of sin alright – v5 – that “old marriage” was very unpleasant – “sin took any place from which an assault [*Greek απο-ορμη*] could be mounted and perpetrated every evil in me”. He ended up a “prisoner in chains” *αιχμαλωτιζοντον* to the law of sin which used something good to conquer him. Paul confesses “**Had I not had trouble with the commandment “not to covet” I had not recognized my sin** [*Greek επιθυμσεις* a wantonness lust and passion]–the unmanageable “inner”.

The law of self and sin is at war with conscience and commandment. Despite mighty strivings Paul is [*Greek ταλαιπωρος* – 'enduring much that is wretched', Plutarch uses it of "an exhausted body"] – he is afflicted with exertion, worn out by this ignominy and like a man captive under the ancient war code of the Etruscans – the brain child of *Mezentius* – where a prisoner was tortured to death by having a putrid battlefield corpse bound mouth to mouth arms to arms and legs to legs to his own body. Sin is cruel.

SELF LIFE-AN ANALYSIS

Samuel Rutherford's assessed "self" as "O wretched idol-myself." *John Stott* is sure that all the good intentions in the world avail nothing – "How can self cast out self?" says he. *Dr Pink* put it simply, "Self is the big 'I' in the middle of sin". The problem is well characterised by the laddie who said to the lassie on the rocking horse-"you get off and then there'll be plenty of room for me". Nowhere does Paul blame Satan for his own sin. nor must we: but when I find there is a war being waged and I am not a happy participant on the

side of evil – and every platform of attack is being used against me I must recognise like Paul I have a weighty adversary and one of great subtlety. The following chapter puts names to our great adversary and our mighty helper. Was there not a "Did God" behind the fall? Does not Satan masquerade behind so much pathos and suffering as we see in the world accusing and deceiving? Is not the Holy Spirit He who made me free from the law of sin and death?

INDWELLING SIN

This is a regular difficulty. Our Lord Jesus spoke about the rich relationship possible with Him on the essential hypothesis "If you abide in me and I in you". There is no other way to victory and what a glorious victory it is that is won in the face of imminent defeat. There is just one cord among the broken strings of the soul that yields hope in Romans 7, it is Paul's newfound joy in living obedient – he says "I delight in the law of God". For the apostle this obedience is sheer pleasure – his word is our "hedony".

MERCHANT OF VENICE

The Love of God demands the highest yielding of the heart! Portia's hand was obtained by the suitor who made the right choice of casket. The first was inscribed, "Who chooses me gets as much as he deserves" It was silver & contained a fool's head. The second chose a gold casket inscribed "Who chooses me shall get what many men desire" – it held a skull. The third was lead and on it written "who chooses me shall give & hazard all he has". This was Bassanio's wise choice (*cf. Mk.8*) As our gracious G.P, in Co. Tyrone (Ireland) *Dr Archie Fullerton* once said, *"The entrance fee to Christianity is 'nothing' but the annual subscription is 'everything'.*

Jesus take me as I am

I can come no other way

Take me deeper into You,

Make me flesh life melt away.

ROMANS 8

Holy Spirit, Love Divine

Glow within this heart of mine;

Kindle every high desire;

Perish self in thy pure fire

Well might Samuel Longfellow who wrote the above lines recognize that the Holy Spirit brings truth, love, power, righteousness, peace and joy into life.

Christianity – mine and yours is unthinkable and unworkable without Pentecost. This jubilee of the soul must impact on every believer or that soul is left becalmed, endangered. How does one live above the power of cruel suffering and unpalatable lust? The Spirit gives us a new 'mind' [*Greek φρονημα – of lively spirit high mind & good courage*] on things v.6 & v.27. This technical word of the apostle means "highest practical motive". The Spirit "indwells" the believer as Christ's possession – and God reserves the *right* to take us away [*Greek αποκαρδοκια literally 'from the head'*] from others v19 (cf. 2Kings 2.3 – where Elijah was taken from Elisha's head). A "therefore" is found in v.12 & v.31 – the first implies *our debt to live for Christ is lifelong* – the second that because He will guide His elect from the cradle of 'conversion' to the grave of 'home-calling' *we are to live heroically*.

PEOPLE WITH A MIND AND MOTIVE IN LIFE

We have been pardoned! Years ago *President Andrew Jackson* pardoned *George Wilson* but George didn't appreciate it. The then attorney *Earl Marshall* defined a pardon as "a paper the value of which depends on its acceptance by the person pardoned". Being "in Christ" (*29 times used by Paul*) is being within the circle of the people of God. The believer has a new mind. As *Bishop Handley Moule* has said, the Christian "is not promenading on a smooth and easy way" but marching in enemy territory – alive to the adversary. There is no death sentence, so we live for Jesus, who bore our guilt and sin-nothing is more natural. *Samuel Chadwick* said, "Carnality is an emotional de-stabiliser." Develop – not a mind of your own-but a *thoroughly Christian mind* – that's the first challenge and it involves the bible. We live by "the expulsive power of a new affection". "Two natures struggle in my breast – one is foul the other godly – the one I feed will dominate"

REDEMPTION MORTIFICATION SANCTIFICATION GLORIFICATION

Being "led" in a love relationship to Christ means sharing His future as Heirs. This conscious experience began with "Abba Father" v.15 **When**

a person is converted the soul first senses its riches – its privilege – its adoption and destiny! We live repentant lives – that is what mortification means – cf. v.29 "conforming more to His likeness as the days go by. As Christ "led by the Spirit" into the wilderness overcame we will be enabled to be victors by faith. The world "groans" because of decay & seduction and we groan expectant of the rapture and the Spirit of God 'groans' [*Greek στεναζω – to sigh over 'others' plight' or 'for lack of food' or 'evil things'*] for mercy – which Christ takes further following Gods ground plan as He 'intercedes' [*Greek ευτυχανω – meaning to come to assist 'when the bridge is broken'*] When "we do not appear on the landing place" reaching out to the Lord then the Spirit of God is straitened. He keeps the plan on the road before God [*Greek κατα θεος*]; v27 so that what **Matthew Henry** calls the **4 golden links** are not broken i.e. "we grow into the image of Christ" from (a) predestinated plan to (b) sinners called to be sons(c) believers justified from all things and (d) saints ready for glory in the great 'redemption' [*Greek απολυτρωσις 'buying out of the market place'*]. (cf. *Christ holds all of us through His atonement & intercession just as the Alpine mountaineer supports the climbers with his axe cut in the rock*) **Cowper** in a deep mood of depression was picked up on London Bridge by a Cabbie who in fog toured round for 2 hours "lost". Cowper gladly paid the vast sum due exclaiming – "You saved my life".

PILGRIMS PROGRESS

In all these troubles we are above victors. (cf. *The semaphore message from Waterloo was incomplete and it read "Wellington defeated" The addition of "Napoleon" in a second message changed everything.*) Let's not be daunted. Bunyan's Holy War shows how it will be. Mr. Forget good and Lord Will-be-will, Mayor Lustings, Incredulity, Hard Heart the council of 13 and that Disturber of the peace Mr. Filth with Mr. Anything Darling cannot resist the Word of El Shaddai v.31 With what heroism shall we respond to a God who keeps us going on toward heaven?

VICTORY

An Irishman once answered "What is a more than conqueror?" saying "a conqueror is one who wins by fighting – a super conqueror one who wins without a blow". Take the *replies* of **Chrysostom** when the

persecuting Emperor said "I will take your possessions; He replied," In Christ I possess all things". "I will take your liberty", he said.

Chrysostom replied," He who has the Son is free indeed". Finally he threatened," I will take your life. The golden-lipped preacher answered, "I shall be happy for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Romans was written A.D.58- 21 years after Paul's conversion. Said Chalmers "Give me back all my 21years; shipwrecks, savages, spears & the club that knocked me to earth – I will still be your missionary, Lord!"

There's victory in Jesus my Saviour for ever

He sought me and He bought me with His own precious blood.

He loved me ere I knew Him and thus He drew me to Him.

He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

ROMANS 9

DEVOTED TO A GOOD LONGSUFFERING GOD WHO PLANS AND CALLS

Paul shows that Jews have "the adoption" as God's special people; they have the history of God's glorious abiding; they have covenants; they have the scriptures; they have the symbolic priestly ministry; and besides these they have the promises still to be worked out and theirs was the blood line of the Christ and they were an example of divine election for the well-being of nations. Election Paul argues is to be understood as a "*prior* proposal (open to discussion)" or "placing in" God's will (*προθεσις*) and it operates along with continuous calling. At the end of the Old Testament Malachi the last prophet said "Jacob have I loved, Esau was my personal enemy!" Four times God "hardens" Pharaoh's heart. (*Exodus 4.21, 7.3, 9. 12, 14, 4&7*)

THE POTTER

Paul now moves on to answer *a bold critic*. "Why does God impute guilt?" "Who has resisted Gods will?" Has not the potter rights over clay to make a vessel to honour and dishonour. The Greek word here used of clay is *πλασμα* meaning "that which imitates or shams." As the pot imitates the potter people play at God, directing their own lives and they fail. Paul also uses the word *πηλος* "mud" to demonstrate man's sinful nature .God's creative act takes the clay

'swollen' with water/[Greek *φύραμα* – used of the 'swelling' of pride] and from it makes vessels which honour him & which dishonour him as men are humbled or hardened. While desiring and purposing *θελω* (v.10) to show His wrath He endures the vessels that harden their hearts thus fitting themselves for destruction -making the riches of His Glory known over vessels of mercy. Both Hosea and Isaiah present a glorious picture of God who thinks and plans long-term. Hosea pledges that the God who brought back Gomer will in time restore His people to faith. Isaiah cries aloud that God will bring a remnant back in the last days (*Isa. 1.9, Isa.40.1-11*). Paul also refers to the longsuffering of God toward the Gentiles- "It is not the *strong will* or *great effort* of him that runs, but *divine mercy* along that saves- so Gentiles by faith have to date outstripped the Jews who like hurdlers stumbled over Christ.

**Unresting unhasiting and silent as light
Nor wanting nor wasting Thou rulest in might
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

ROMANS 10

DEVOTED TO ISRAEL AND THECHURCH OF GOD

We all like warm people-compassionate people. Zeal is good but let it be according to truth not fanaticism; sincere and without hypocrisy, full of sweet faith.

Paul's is a godly zeal. He is content yet he is begging. His prayer was for the salvation of Israel who were "continuing"(v.3) 'their endeavour to erect their monument to self righteousness'(*Gadet*)

The goal of the law is perfection. There is no point in trying to keep the law perfectly – it cannot be done. This demands Messiah. **There is no point in wondering who goes to heaven?** Christ leads captivity captive. *Moses* indeed said, "This do and you shall live" but he also said, "Don't think you came into Canaan for your own righteousness"(Lev. 18.5) "Rather did I prostrate myself for you for forty days" He Mediated in face of divine displeasure. Moses urged upon Israel the word of faith, "It is not in heaven. It is not beyond the sea. The word is very near you-in your heart and in your mouth...Love the LORD and walk in his ways" Deut. 30 12-14 **Christ is the end of the law for all who believe!** *Hans Andersen* said, "When God made man; he gave him five kisses; feeling, hearing,

smelling, tasting, seeing" We might add that God so loved us that He gave His son for our salvation. Paul continues **'If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is LORD and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved'**-effectively the apostle says **God can be approached and known through Christ the Mediator.**

Henrietta Mears called that verse *thunder and lightning* because the sound quickly follows the power of the work within.

It has been said that the head minus the heart is hypocrisy; the heart minus the mouth is cowardice. After *Dr. Graham Scroggie* preached on Acts 10.14 'not so Lord' a girl who sought Christ deferred confessing for two reasons; first, she was an accomplished concert pianist and second she feared the missionary call. *Scroggie* left her to score out "Not so" and leave "LORD". She didn't do it. Zeal can't say "Not so Lord".

The same Lord is rich toward all who believe. There is no difference.¹² The Greek word for 'difference' is *διαστολη* [*fused of 'the opening of the heart valve'*] God can open the heart of a Lydia or a *Pat Boone*, or draw a Mohawk to Himself or teach *issumagijoujungnainermik* (*forgiveness*) to an Eskimo.

Paul quotes Isaiah 65.1(v.20), "I was found by those who did not seek me...I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me" Isaiah predicts that nations who did not seek God will be called and in a sense Israel is impeached by Paul for her "refusal" to claim Christ as her king. *Sir Robert Cecil* said, *Zeal alone may degenerate into ferociousness and brutality and love alone into fastidiousness and delicacy.* We need zeal for righteousness in our gospel for this very good reason! *Thomas Huxley* said, *it doesn't take much of a man to be a Christian but it takes all of him.*

Give me oil in my lamp, Keep me burning

Give me oil in my lamp I pray

Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning

Keep me burning till the break of day.

ROMANS 11

DEVOTION TO ONE WHO LOVES THE DOWN AND OUT GOD IS IN THE RAG TRADE AND LOVES REMNANTS

Paul says God did not push Israel away and he sees *himself* as God's remnant work. God is amazingly creative. Rabbis often quoted from ELIJAH – i.e. *epic stuff of an age that preludes the last age* – Paul in

this vein cites God's reply to the question "Is Israel finished?" as that of a negotiator who retained 7000 faithful servants. **Moses laments** "until even today" (Deut29.4). God has not given you a heart or eyes to see the greatness of deliverance. **David predicts v9 the money table** as a financial snare, bait and a repayment – of Israel in her state of blindness. But, says Paul, Israel is like a man who has terribly stumbled but not fallen beyond recovery. Paul introduces a beautiful picture of the tree God has nurtured – the Olive. The olive leaf & tree survived the flood. To be a prolific fruiter good stock is grafted on to the wild shrub. Moribund plants when pruned have been known to produce as many as five new trunks. The five continents of saints have been grafted in over the Church era.

Study the **complex series of Hypotheses** of Paul. These "If's" are what linguists call "prepositions in crasis" – in other words they have more than speculative significance – they carry a cumulative punch – and reflect the Hebrew "If" **ma** which has primary "demonstrative" meaning. Paul is teaching the "goodness" & "severity" of God against the backcloth of a long swathe of history. History itself has developed fast before our wondering eyes in the 20th century. Well might the "heave-offering of the gigantic Gentile loaf" – **the lump** – be offered in our time as the meal offering in the days of Moses – as thanksgiving for the Jewish homecoming – cf. v.16 and Numbers15.17-21.

DEMONSTRATIVE HYPOTHESES

If their casting away enriches the world what effect their gathering?

If my "diakonia" to the Gentiles serves – let it inspire like zeal for salvation among the Jews.

If their casting away is reconciliation what is their receiving?...Resurrection!

If the first fruit leaven is holy so the lump – if the root is holy so are the branches.

If some branches were broken off – remember you are graft – beware pride.

If God did not consider the natural indispensable neither is the wild.

If they believe they (*as good stock*) will be grafted in – and make a really fruitful tree.

FIVE TESTIMONIES FROM ISAIAH

The fullness of the Gentiles comes in – and for the moment seems to wipe out Israel. Paul here uses his (1) Christ as Rescuer – one who comes with the power of a mighty wave (*Isa59*). He predicts with Isaiah (27.9)

(2)“the East wind” of suffering –Jacob’s trouble –when God chastens Israel and yet is her daily keeper. (3) Isaiah's 3rd testimony (*45.15&17*) is that *God will hide but appear for "Israel's everlasting salvation"*.

(4) The fourth is "a word not returning void" and under it Israel as a people is to enjoy unending peace". *Paul joins Job in urging "None can come back on God(Isaiah55.11-13)*.

(5) Paul’s fifth remark based on Isaiah is "the word stands – Christ is coming" to comfort Israel (*Isaiah40.1,13,31*) – to this is added God’s counsel in a second stunning testimony from Jeremiah – (*Jer23.6-8 with v.18*) – with the promise only the Lord can effect-that “Israel shall dwell safely.”

**Behold the mountain of the Lord
In latter days shall rise
On mountain tops above the hills
And greet the wondering eyes.**

ROMANS 12

DEVOTED TO CHRIST

“Enlist-but not as chocolate soldiers”-C.T.Studd

The complete 'placing' [*Greek παριστημι*] of soldiers under a captain v1 is “living sacrifice” and may well result in making the supreme sacrifice. This is the commitment every genuine believer makes to the captain of salvation. Get on the mountain top. *Christ* was different – men *on the mount* of Transfiguration were different – it’s very important to say *Moses* was different: he did not consider Egyptian pleasures. *Elijah* was different – he refused the life that was moulding the nation under Jezebel. Peter & James & John were there to learn how to be non-conformists and to obey God rather than man. The highlight of those lives was to see heavenly blessing. In the wilderness the peoples' gifts & Bezaleel's skill make the tabernacle. But Moses cannot yet go in until the sin-offering & burnt offering and fellowship offering are killed. Moses & Aaron go in. As they come out the “Fire falls on the offerings” – every offering thereafter points to Christ. We need the cross to go into

His assembly, the Spirit to go out witnessing. Taking another case Elijah contested with the Baalite prophets and the outstanding difference was that fire fell on his offering – made between the evenings – at the time representing Passover. It is always thus – living sacrifices – lives on the altar- are set ablaze by the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE ANALOGY OF FAITH?

We have to come to some view on the Analogy of Faith"v3. We must be sure we have experience of what is preached. So let's appreciate the "width of learning in the church, the depth of discerning in godly instructors & the heights of wisdom yet bound up in God's word. Preaching, as Matthew Henry says, points directly to the future state –in this the prophet is unique. Service demands energy; teaching demands thorough study of the story of the bible and training in its use [Greek διδασκαλία – literally 'journals of the effectiveness of drama']; exhortation means getting alongside the lonely & needy time and again; giving is a simple exercise –in seagoing terms – it averts danger for the ship of the local church απλοος. Leadership too is much about plotting the course of the ship of the local church and take timely action to avoid rocks and ride out storms. There is a cheery way of showing compassion [Greek ιλαροτης - laughter] that lifts the downcast. Gifts used with faith bring a golden harvest.

HOW TO KEEP LOVE ABLAZE!

(a) See how Amos the shepherd read the night stars aright for their spiritual truth. Amos 5.15 (v.9) "Cleave to the good". Amos laments Israel's *divorce* from the Lord. He urges "seek the Lord", " Seek him who made the seven stars known as *the shepherdess & her maids* and symbolic of **the church and 'Orion'**, the soon coming *victorious one*, who turns the shadow of death to morning & strengthens the spoiled against the strong.

Don't wait for affection to be shown-anticipate it with your love. It was said of Cranmer," the more you wrong him the more he loves you!

(b)See how David prayed for the sick. v11 and Psalms 35.13(15) How did David do it? "They rewarded me evil for good but as for me when they were sick my clothes were sackcloth I humbled myself with fasting

– my prayer returned to my bosom" – i.e. **He prayed never so fervently.**

(c) **See how Solomon won over enemies** *Love* thus serves the Lord as it gives blessings rejoices weeps Prov.3.7 (16) "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding – in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your business" Look then at Proverbs 25.21 "If thine enemy hunger feed him, heaping coals of fire on his head." Keep the fire of love ablaze in the tough circumstances of persecution "Vengeance is mine" says the Lord Deut. 32.35 (v.19) – but love provide. charcoal for need of the foe – it is not into the human retribution of Lev. 9.18 **Chrysostom** writing in this vein refers to bulls with torches on their backs as "invincible in war" – let us learn from Solomon and imitate Paul in conquering evil with good.

**Love divine so great and wondrous
Deep and mighty, pure, sublime"
Coming from the heart of Jesus,
Just the same through tests of time.**

ROMANS 13

DEVOTED TO THE HOMELAND

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN-THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD 1-7

Britain is a parliamentary democracy since the days of Cromwell. We who live in these islands stand under the laws in a free society. Paul writes "the powers that be are ordained of God". The individual ruler Nero (the equivalent of our P.M.) is not exactly what Paul had in mind. He uses the Greek word *εξουσία* for Powers – where *Aristotle Demosthenes and Saphocles* speak about the executive official [*Greek κυριος*]. Paul urges that the government or magistracy is "handed down authority" for the world. This would be found to agree with the prophetic vision of Daniel. Paul argues again that it's "ministry" is to defend the wellbeing of the citizen and uphold the censures of the state. It is, he argues, also the "organiser of public works" [*Greek λειτουργια public performances*]. Due attention to roads and security and public order is, he is urging, an ongoing duty of the state which we need. Under this plan of God for our good we owe "taxes on merchandise" [*Greek φορος*] "rates on property" [*Greek τελος*] and compliance e.g. "in going a mile" with duly appointed law enforcers,

and the honorarium of magistrates which compares with our costs in legal action [*Greek τιμη*].

THE PERSON TO PERSON DOMAIN – ONE'S NEIGHBOUR 8-10

We owe it to those close to us to live in a way to care and maintain the Christ-like relationship with them. Love fulfils the law. It does not "trade on" [*Greek εργατιζω*] relatives or neighbours. Now the words "neighbour" *πλησιος* and "fulfill" *πληπος* share the same stable. A man ought to neither abuse his partner nor misuse his neighbour but live for the blessing of both.

THE PRIVATE DOMAIN – WALK HONESTLY 11ff

Live honestly or rather "as a gentleman" [Greek ευσχημονως] with the elegance and grace of the Lord. The greatest incentive to live as a gentleman is that we are closer to heaven today than when we were converted. We are nearer to the day of true elegance. We must remember heaven is not a rude place – not a place of ill speech or manners or temper. "Wake up to this reality" says Paul "and arm yourselves", Paul says. **Augustine** once said, "**three alternate lifestyles threaten namely – drunken parading the streets; going to bed with mistresses & lewd living; and the life given to strife and boiling passionate anger**"

**King of my life I crown Thee now
Thine shall the glory be!
Lest I forget thy thron-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.**

ROMANS 14 DEVOTED TO LIBERTY IN CHRIST

Martin Luther in his book on The Liberty of the Christian Man opens with the statement "A Christian is a most free lord of all subject to none; a Christian is a most dutiful servant of all subject to all!"

FIVE PRINCIPLES

The principle of the *weaker brother* demands no censorship of a private sincere conviction, (vv1-4) though this may be based on lesser facts

People matter. Don't censure others with genuine views. Seek to instruct and widen the frame of knowledge.

Christ is Lord. Let God be the judge cf.v.10. *The βημα* throne set against *βρωμα* meats is far more vital.

Let the Holy Spirit guide. Keep your affection for one another and solidarity in matters of salvation.

Build one another up i.e. Edification in faith

Conscience is to be respected. We are to test[Greek δοκιμαζω our consciences by scripture. Personal views need not follow another's conscience and may be right before God. First we must learn, then we must submit to bible teaching as to the Lord's will, and in this we must be guided by the Holy Spirit and the mind of our brethren, then we must seek to confirm one another in faith and leave one another liberty of conscience in the last analysis.

ALL DO NOT THINK ALIKE

Charles the Fifth once said, "How could I have been so foolish as to think I could make everyone think alike in religious matters if I could not get 12 clocks to tick alike. While there are of necessity differences let us study the similarities. There are 4 contexts – The cross, the judgment seat, the Church testimony, the word and conscience.

1 We are saved by faith in the atonement of the cross – brothers in Christ v.9 that is why Christ died

2 We shall all appear before Christ's judgment – and come to terms with Him.

3 We share His righteousness peace and joy as we walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

4 We are to avoid sin by a strict continual testing of our conscience by bringing it to the word.

DR. A.T SCHOFIELD ON LIBERTY

Schofield was given a collie. It was not used to the city. It was all right in the house. Every time he would take it out it held up its neck for the collar. When it got to the door it bounded off as if to go where it liked but it was restricted. Then the day came when he went out and though it waited the collar he had none. At the door it bounded off around the corner but thereafter it trotted alongside him happily. It had given him its heart it was faithful.

**Sing Oh sing of my Redeemer!
With His blood I've purchased me!
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt and made me free!**

ROMANS 15

DEVOTED TO OTHERS

BURDEN-BEARERS

We are in debt to fellow believers to bear the weaknesses of those who do not increase in strength. These are people not able to increase in strength (*ADUNAMIS*) – with little force for battle (*ASTHENOS*) – and not able to weigh truth up in their minds. There was and is need to be aware of the need of encouragement for such people

Loving one's neighbour is building him/her up. The telling example of Christ acting for our spiritual good when we were weak serves delightfully cf. Psalm 69.9. The Lord "bears once for all the combined insults of his revilers in one "heap".

UNITY IN ROME

With several house churches nationalities and gradations of society subscribing to the Christian faith Paul breathes a short prayer – which derives its secret from the Gethsemane prayer of John 17.

A SECOND MARRIAGE

Paul urges the Romans to accept one another. The word used here is used by *Xenophon* to speak of receiving brothers of a second marriage(*PROSLAMBANO*)In addition to the union already referred to we are to take others alongside just as Christ *made room* in his relationship with the Father for disciples and then for a world of lost sinners. This capacity to share that love which is inspired by divine revelation is in tune with the highest in scripture – from 2 Sam. 22.50 where David *made room* for approaching Gentiles – this is the ultimate in the service of David – cf. Psalm 18.49. In Deuteronomy 32 Moses *made room* for believing people who uphold Israel giving thus his example of the way Israel should live & serve others. In Psalm 117 the Gentiles are called on to *make room*.

The nations are to rejoice in the covenant love of God for his servant people. The ultimate gathering of the peoples centers on the Branch, Jesus Christ referred to by Isaiah Ch.11.10. There is a good deal on this theme in the epistle – cf. Rom. 7.7 and 11.7 .This *making room* is seen all through the Epistle and is Gods sovereign plan – cf. 3.29-30 &9.23-35

NOUTHETIC INSTRUCTION

A Church practicing the faith, worshipping and witnessing should also have a counseling capability.

Paul is confident the church is able to grow in its ability to instruct within its ranks. This comes (a) through the fullness of Gods Holy Spirit at work yielding courage and nobility (*AGATHOSUNE*) *virtue communicated* – also (b) from experiential knowledge which has come from feeding on the word of Christ.

SPAIN

Paul only asked to sleep enough to rest in Rome en route to Spain. He urged it would be after Pentecost. He pointed to the practical care of the Jewish Christians by the Greek Church in times of famine – cf. Agabus. When he had ensured the safe conduct of this large gift he would sail west. Paul strangely and fascinatingly uses the middle of the verb *to come* three times – he presaged coming *ALONE*. He asked for prayer to be saved from the zealot Jews – that the gifts would be received with joy and that he would rest in Rome. All three prayer requests were

answered in a wonderful if dramatic way. Riot and shipwreck and prison interposed; nevertheless he arrived at Rome in the blessing of the gospel with many souls saved en route.

Is your life a channel of blessing?

Is the love of God flowing through you?

Are you telling the lost of a Saviour?

Are you ready His service to do?

ROMANS 16

DEVOTED TO THE SAINTS

PAUL GIVES US THE FULLEST LINE UP OF 1ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS

PHOEBE

This lady speaks of the highest & best in the early church – she was entrusted with the epistle. Her church was in Cenchrea, the port of Corinth – whose name means “malleable iron”. Paul has a lovely trilogy of remarks about her. Stand up together to welcome her; stand by her in what needs she has; she stood at her post to care for many and for myself in illness. Her befitting name speaks of one who was “inspired by and spoke on behalf of the pure and light giving one – the Christ in her case. This woman was most probably a hostess or may even have applied nursing skills – but she clearly travelled widely as this trip over the Adriatic shows-perhaps like Luke who may have been a ship’s doctor she was a ship’s nurse. Paul conveys real warmth and desires Christian relationships to be both wholesome and affectionate. He speaks both of “embrace” -encircling with the arms-and of a “holy kiss” either to show the expressed warmth of a friend most especially in the circle of Christ cf. Luke 22.48.

EMBRACING GREETINGS

Paul conveys real warmth and desires Christian relationships to be both wholesome and affectionate. He speaks both of embrace – encircling with the arms – and of a holy kiss-of a “friend’s” expressed warmth. When Paul characterizes the “kiss” as holy he is in line with its pagan usage as intimating the love of the gods for men. We gather from the apostle his desire for wide deep bonds believers – and for intimation of genuine commitment in “the kiss” – cf. Luke. 22.48.

NAMED CHRISTIANS

1 PRISCA & AQUILA (*old-fashioned & eagle*) pose a fascinating question. How did they remain alive when they laid down the neck for Paul?

Is this symbolic? Did this man whose name means "hero conqueror" in the games – come from an illustrious family and himself escape with his life when he entered the arena instead of Paul? This is the sort of love that characterized the early church – cf. First John 3.16. They lead a house church (v5).

2 EPAENETUS (*praiseworthy, approved*) – an old believer, the first fruits of Asia – 1st journey AD45-48, 12 years ago – this man is the first of the beloved (*humbled himself*) in this list as any stalwart would be – in persecution.

3 MARY – like many ladies of the time committed to “pounding meal” and grinding flour – vital to family care.

4 ANDRONICUS AND JUNE Also Jews – also imprisoned – such people have a badge on their shields” among the apostles – they were in Christ before me.

5 AMPLIAS (*enlarged/take no further legal action*) Just as Christ forgave he lived to his name as a Christian-so was the second of the beloved for it!

6 URBANE & STACHYS [*refined & polite (or) ear of corn*] The first is a fellow worker – Stachys the third beloved – one who learned of the “corn of wheat that fell into the ground & died – and lived that way – so the third “beloved”!

7 APELLES Tested & approved – as metals in the circle of Christ.

8 ARISTOBOLUS’ GROUP (*best adviser*).

9 HERODIAN (*fellow Jew*) – and if the name mean anything from a similar background.

10 NARCISSUS’ GROUP (“*continuing in the Lord*”-not in narcotics)
The verb demonstrates perseverance.

11 TRYPHENA AND TRYPHOSA (*object of pleasure & broken pieces*) – both working hard as Christians.

12 PERSIS (*respected*) who is beloved No4 for the numerous undertakings she commenced & continued (*aorist*).

13 RUFUS (red-haired – brother of Alexander Mark 15.21 – he and his mother, Simon's wife now in Rome were true to cross. Simon would appear to have died.

14 ASYNCRITOS(*incomparable*).

15 PHLEGON(flame).

16 HERMES(*messenger of God*).

17 PATROBAS(*achiever*).

18 ERMA(*foundation*) another of the 4 house churches mentioned – v.4, v.11, v.14, v.15.

19 PHILOLOGUS & JULIA (*lover of the word & lady perhaps of Julian gens*).

20 NEREA (*god of the sea*) his sister & OLYMPAS (*house of God*) and all the saints with them – a big church group.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Turn from those who doubt or quarrel. Stand apart from scandals irreconcilable with the doctrine you learned to practice. These operate by fulsome praise and thoroughly beguile. Paul then uses a metaphor from *discus throwing* – let your obedience reach to all men – excel in obedience. Games may have been in progress currently. I wish you to be wise as to the chief good – or Christ – inviolate and untouched as to the movement of evil or towards evil.

DOXOLOGY – Christ can use you in harvesting according to the gospel and it's heralding – in line with the mystery silent through eons of time – now made plain in prophetic scripture by the command of the eternal God – who made it known for obedience of faith among nations – to God alone through Jesus Christ be age long glory.

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee;

Wher'er our changeful lot is cast

Glad when Thy gracious smile we see,

Blest when our faith can hold Thee fast.

ROMANS – AND THE HISTORIC ODESSEY

Romans itself is an *Epic* of logic, doctrine and Christian warfare which thread the Paul's masterpiece together. It carries the story of mankind not unlike a great *Spiritual Odyssey*. Paul the inveterate traveller and soldier of Christ has left us a letter which describes the history of man

in its ancient downgrade but also reflects the first century upturn in the life of man with the invasion of grace at the first advent of Christ. The parameters of the letter run to the ultimate ingathering of the Jews and the days when Satan is bruised beneath the feet of the Church in the latter days. Good and evil have jockeyed for the soul of man but the future belongs to Christ and His Kingdom shall prevail. The development of this great theme and the remaining vicissitudes through which man as a pilgrim to the apocalyptic city must pass still intrigues us all. A classic *Odyssey* that could marry the doctrine, logic and spiritual warfare of this book would carry very considerable appeal. The glory of the second advent of Christ both in the subtlety and suddenness of the rapture of His saints and the splendour of His arrival on Mt Olivet as the curtain closure on this church era and the curtain raiser on His rule from sea to sea is surely the final exposition. That will be the crescendo of all that Paul ever wrote; the day when *our Odysseus* comes home; the time when war shall be no more...Paul has the most felicitous description for that day. It is "life from the dead"(11.15).

THE END OF THE VADE MECUM

Bob Coffey

Aramaic Bible Companion