

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

SECOND CORINTHIANS

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CHAPTER 1

The “Comfort” chapter

(1) WE HAVE A PRIEST WHO IS LORD OVER ALL – THE SOURCE OF OUR COMFORT

Israel in the desert were most at ease with God in their midst when Aaron pronounced his blessing “**God will bless you (kneel by you) and shut you up safely with thorns (or nails); the Lord will reveal His countenance turning to you and showing you grace; turning to you the Lord will lift up his countenance as a sacrifice or cheerfully and will beget peace as a child belonging to you**” (*Numbers 6.24 Literal translation.*) Jehovah is very different from the gods of Egypt. If we look back toward the Exodus he is pictured as the shepherd of his people .If we look forward the statement holds good of Jesus – His expiating death – His resurrection – His incarnation amidst His people. Little wonder Paul began each of 11 letters with an abstract “grace and peace” from this blessing – which to this day is unsurpassed in spiritual grandeur. I have no doubt this was used by the High priest of our profession to “comfort” the early disciples – cf. *Luke 24 50-51* until the Holy Spirit came. I am sure Paul began his letters with this blessing which demonstrates the grandeur of Christ as Melchizadek and emphasises the cross as a source of salvation –like the sheep-pen of the sheep with its wall topped with thorns

*At the cross at the cross where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away
It was there by faith I received my sight and now I am happy all the day.*

It is of interest in passing that Paul reckons comfort and blessing derive from the Father and the Son. The Eastern Church following *Photius* in the 9th century denied that the Holy Spirit – the comforter – proceeded from the Son.

BLESS THE LORD

“Blessed be God” says Paul. Hebrew song is full of such blessing. Here are 13 psalms to use devotionally to help you rejoice the heart of God. *Psalms 16.7, 26.12, 34.1, 63.4, 66.8, 96.2, 100.4, 102.1-2-20-21-22, 104.1-35,115.18, 134.2, 135.19-20,145-1-2-10-21.* “Bless the Lord O my Soul” is our fitting response to the cross.

COMFORT FROM GOD OUR FATHER 3

Floyd McClung in *The Father heart of God* tells the story of Mehmet Ali Agca who hated his own father passionately and smiled throughout the funeral in Yesiltepe, Turkey. He drew up a hate list and the day came when he shot *John Paul II*. To his cell in Rome’s Mamartine prison the recovered John Paul made a pilgrimage of forgiveness on December of 1983 and those 20 minutes when he spoke to the man as a brother offered him a way out of the bitterness of his soul.

- (a) God is the Father of all mercies **οικτιρμοι**. In the singular OIKTIRMOS is “pity” in the plural OIKTIRMOI it is “lamentations”. Here the tears of Christ represent the deep **love of the father**. *When theologians speak of the “impassible” nature of*

God they cannot mean “past feeling” – only that *we as creatures cannot inflict pain and distress on God outside his will* –indeed in his love He has in Christ borne our sorrows-for God is Love! The Lord hates the pitiless! 2Sam12.6, Job19.21, Ps69.20, Isa63.9, Ezekiel36.21, Amos1.11. All of scripture concentrates our attention on ***the eyes of the Lord***. His omniscience is in the nature of *refined perception* responding to love and hate, hardship and carelessness in the creature.

- (b) God is the Father of all comfort **παρακλησις**-in other words He **always answers entreaty** – ***His ears are ever open*** to our appeal. Any other view is discordant with Christ’s teaching & the *bible doctrine of prayer*.

(2) THE CUP OF COMFORT FOR THE HEAT OF SUFFERING 4-7

1. BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT “Be ye filled with the Spirit”-The Holy Spirit is
2. BEAR PAIN Pain like grit in the oyster creates lives which are spiritual gems
3. BE GENTLE. Troubles create a *gentle spirit*
4. PUT DOWN ROOTS IN DROUGHT OF PERSECUTION Root in the word – churches strengthen in persecution
5. OVERFLOW Come down O love divine The Spirit overflows to aid as suffering for Christ abides
6. BE BOLD Boldness in suffering energises other believers
7. TESTIFY When leaders testify to God’s comfort the *whole church is encouraged*
8. SHARE When churches share in suffering it is halved – sometimes its duration is less. Christianity must interface!

(3) LOOK ABOVE WHEN THE OUTLOOK IS BLEAK 8-11

Paul tells his Corinthian friends that in Asia he was weighed down by burdens beyond endurance-so he and those with him despaired of coming out of it with their lives. He writes “we had the sentence of death so our faith could only be in God who raises the dead.” God spared them death when so “young” **τηλικος** Paul now believes he will be spared to live out his life. *Many joined in our work begging God for us-many will give thanks for God’s grace to us*. Paul speaks as one who believes absolutely in our ever responsive compassionate mediator – one more “triumph” consolidated by the interceding Lord

(4) HOW TO LIVE COMFORTABLY WITH CONSCIENCE 12-14

Corinthian Christians rallied to Paul as a man true to conscience in a corrupt city. Famed for 1000 prostitutes it was swamped by sin and needed more that “philosophia” to purify the air. Christians rallied to Paul not for his intellectual prowess but because he heralded the *plain truth* **απλοτης** – of Jesus. They rallied to him because of sincerity – walking in the light of God’s judgment **ειλικρινω** *i.e. judging in sunlight*. Most of all they rallied to him as he brought a message of **Grace** – not grace that excused *sensual cravings* Greek **σαρκικος** or practices but grace that brought joy & sanctity of soul & spirit.

Paul lived in *close contact with προς* the Christians in a world order that was passing away. He believed that everything the Corinthians would “read” in the body of his letters or learn from intimate contact with him or in fathoming his heart would enable them to boast of his witness to God’s grace and he for his part would boast in them as examples of grace – until the day he stood before Christ.

(4) PAUL IS EXEMPLARY IN APOLOGISING 15

“But”, the Corinthians might rejoin, “You promised to come to us and failed to turn up. Have you no conscience? Are you a hypocrite? Where is your fatherly love for

us?” Essentially Paul’s answer is the **Grace** of an apology. An apology is not an excuse-it is an explanation of circumstances others may well fail to understand because they are complex or unknown.

1. PAUL’S SECOND BENEFIT VISIT 16

Paul wanted them to understand he really was determined to come to Corinth first (i.e. earlier) that they might have a second sense and enjoyment of grace – and so he would journey through to Macedonia and back – then lead their mission of support for Christians in Judea. Equally he wanted them to know he was resolved not to adopt the easy way – literally *the technique of a deer* – running away **ελαφρια**.

2. DESPITE FAITHFULNESS IMPUGNED PAUL LIKE JESUS WOULD “COME AGAIN” 17-19

Paul states that he determined nothing by personal desires. If that were so he could as easily say “Yes” as “No” anytime to anything. “God is faithful” he urges, “His word is sincere – it is not “yes and no”. He illustrates – Jesus Christ – God’s son – who is among you through our preaching (*that of Timothy & Silvanus and himself*) was not “yes and no” but between Him and His people **εν αυτω** there is a solid historical “Yes”. This means there is unfailing mutual confidence in Christ – which bonds believers too. *Karl Barth* spoke of the “Yes” of God which is the ground of faith, stating “**Yes** Christ died, **yes** Christ rose – **Yes** Christ is coming again”. These historical facts bring a resource of confidence to the faith community.

3. MEANTIME ANOTHER AMBASSADOR CARRIES COMFORT TO CORINTH 20

God’s promises – in Christ are “Yes” and in Christ “Amen” – to the glory of God through us. Just as God established us in Christ who went to the Father but promised to return so Paul had gone away but promised to return. That same faithful approach guides the apostolic mind and mission. In the interim before the apostle’s return Titus had fitted well the role of a God-given Paraclete (*2 Corinthians 7.6*)

4. GOD IS MY WITNESS AS TO DEFERRING A VISIT 22

“I am calling God as witness as to my inner mind and soul that I did not come to Corinth... *that delay was so I could spare you...* for I would not be Lord over your faith, but we are working together (*Titus and I*) for your joy – for it is by faith you stand firm.

CHRYSOSTOM’S WORDS & IRAQ INVASION APOLOGY-CUM-EXPLANATION

Chrysostom comments that “Paul is saying ‘**Do I make my plans as a man of the flesh independent of God who overrules in providence?**’” – A useful comment.

However, doubt cast on Paul’s good faith required a quite articulate apology and explanation. A parallel might be drawn between this situation and that of President *Bush and Prime Minister Blair* over the 2003 invasion of Iraq – and it will be readily agreed that Paul’s explanation by comparison is comprehensive-yet, understandably, would not readily find universal acceptance.

CHAPTER 2

“Triumph”

We first meet with “overflow” here. This word is used again and again by Paul of Christ’s riches and grace and the Christian in this epistle. The term derives from the military concept of outflanking and triumph recurs familiarly in the letter.

(1) LOVE TRIUMPHS OVER SORROW 1-4

Joy abounds in this epistle (2 Cor.8.2); **grace** abounds too (2Cor1.12, 9.8 cp. Rom.5.20) and now **abounding love** is the subject (2:4). Paul’s word **περισσος** is a military term for *outflanking forces*. The context is this. “I made a judgment in my soul that I should not *come again* to bring you sorrow.” (Paul hints at the parallel of Christ’s coming). He adds “If I bring you sorrow who is there who cheers me except the very one who became sad *when I got to the bottom of the problem* **ἐξ εμου** – and I have written this that I might not come in sorrow to those over whom it is needful that I rejoice, confident of you all, that my joy is the joy of you all “. Paul adds that he has written “through tears” and from a troubled heart that pinches *like a shoe* **θλιψις** – and most of us understand what that’s like – or as an anguished heart that has *suited itself or fastened itself tightly around them like a belt* **συνοχος** – and feels uncomfortable and tight. His aim was not that they should weep but that they might be aware of the love that he has – a love *that outflanks the sorrow and distress* they and he were coming through-so even under the daily care of the churches he does not lose his joy or peace.

(2) FORGIVENESS TRIUMPHS OVER DEPRESSION 5-11

Margaret Benton – a writer on family issues notes the causes of depression – some of which are as relevant to Paul as ourselves, notably “Depression and discouragement occur when we cannot do what we want to do; we cannot get what we want and need; we feel guilty over something we have done or left undone; we have lost someone we love; we have gone to a situation where we were happy to one which holds no promise; we have been hurt by someone; we feel inferior unloved or lonely; we have nothing to offer others.” Her statement includes seven reasons why people are downcast.

“If anyone has been sad, has it not saddened me?” Paul says. He lays on them no burden rather advice that the *particular person* involved recovers *his rights* **επιτιμια** under the majority – that is, be received back into fellowship. Better to be forgiving and comforting towards the *opposing one*, lest *this one* is swallowed up by sorrow. Paul pictures “sadness” as a great mouth “gulping” **καταποθη** it’s victim down – a telling picture indeed of the stunning effects of depression! (v.8) In these days in which we live it is as if there is a competition between depression gulping down its victim to use a phrase of *Hippolytus* – and the victim of depression gulping down pills to allay its symptoms. In *verse 7* Paul is aware of the immediate need to console lest the forces of sorrow become overwhelming **περισσος** for a man burdened by his Paul adds “On account of his sorrow confirm you love to him”.

At this point the apostle states his purpose in writing. It is “in order that he, Paul, might be told how the disciplinary action he advised **δοκιμη** had turned out, and that they – the Corinthians – might prove obedient in all things.” He sought to teach them to be a righteous and forgiving people.

He adds “To whom you show any kindness (*in forgiving*) I also show the same. For if I also have shown any kindness (*in forgiving*), to the one to whom kindness is shown, it is for your sake in the presence of Christ – lest Satan might have “lorded over” us or taken advantage of us – for we are not ignorant of his “swift perceptions” **νοηματα** –

Homer uses it of arrows & swift wings. So as we would say “Satan would be “on to it”. Satan is “waiting in the wings” where we don’t forgive.

(3) FAITH TRIUMPHS IN EUROPE AND ASIA 12-17

(a) As Paul returned to ancient Alexandrian Troas “a gate opened of itself” (v.12) **in the circle of the Lord**. This is a new ministry and in a sort of reference to Peter’s release from prison. Cf. *Acts 16 10 & 26*. Paul is conscious that the Lord is “working with him” continuing to triumph following Philippian imprisonment persecution and problems in Corinth. He is reminded of direct intervention “by angel” in the case of Peter and “by earthquake” in his own.

(b) The **divine vision** had sustaining him – but not finding Titus and being unclear about Corinthian affairs brought tension – He must *relax the strings, ανεσις*. He would sail back. “Thanks be to God who always leads us in a triumph **in Christ**.”

(c) Thanks be to the One who makes plain the fragrant perfume *οσμη* of the knowledge of Him through us in every. Perfume was part of every Roman triumph – the air was heavy with fragrance at Rome in times of triumph. *So the knowledge of Jesus spreads like perfume – but Christ is not restricted to Rome – he is everywhere victorious.* “On the one hand (*as to gospel response*) we are the smell of death in those who move toward death and on the other hand of life in those moving toward life.”

“Who”, says Paul “is sufficient for these things?” He is not like the petty huckster who can devalue his product by half to achieve a sale – not so the apostle. He is not like the sculptor who will use wax to cover his faults-his work is for the Master’s eyes, he speaks as in God’s very presence – he is *sincera* “without wax”.

(4) THE HEAVY DEMAND OF THE APOSTOLIC CARE OF MANY CHURCHES

Here Paul is meditating on the awesome implications of receiving and rejecting Jesus Christ-and how critical it is to represent Him well. The answer is to pray – to be “before the face of God” *κατενωπιον* – aware of His moving – of God’s contemporary commissions and to obey them. So the overarching Macedonian call is not prejudiced by the recent success of evangelism in Corinth and southern Greece or indeed the present door of opportunity in Troas. Paul clearly rejoices in God’s leading and triumphing in every place. He sets *in the wider context* his method and central purpose to be a herald of Christ and thereafter to encourage the church to continue faithful in Christ – whether by a second visit or by sending helpers or by letter – **while he continued to reach out to regions beyond**. This further explanation of his first duty clarifies considerably why he was not back post-haste to Corinth.

CHAPTER 3

“Transformation”

The Spirit engraves God’s love on human hearts

*“Do we begin again to associate or form ourselves into a fellowship? Do we need like some (cf. Judaizers) ‘letters of party affiliation’ to or from you? The Greek word *συστατικον* is used of membership of dissident group or of vines planted together also by *Thucydides* of a league of friendship; by *Herodotus* of union with the prophetic*

oracle; Cyrus – of Asia’s association with him and *Sophocles of marriage*. Paul is speaking of the “love-affair” of Corinth. Their love of Jesus is now widely known

A LETTER WITH A DIFFERENCE 1-4

Paul considers the Corinthians with their new-found faith, fruit of his preaching, *are* God’s letter. He then uses some *middle voice* expressions – “You are *self-written*”, “*self-known*”, “*self read*” i.e. by living for Jesus – endeared to Paul-known by all.

*You yourselves had been completely written in our hearts – i.e. warmly, permanently.
You are aware you are becoming known worldwide.
Your are aware you are the reading interest of all men.*

It is patently clear that you are Christ’s epistle *supplied by us διακονηθεισα* . Paul is just God’s postman – carrying their testimony to the wider world.

They are as a completed letter (the perfect & pluperfect are used) not like the epistle in ink but the handwriting of the Spirit of the Living God on the fleshly tables of their hearts this “union” or “love affair” was sealed.

Paul recognises that Corinthian testimony finds no response in cold unspiritual religion-among those who want letters of proof and cannot read the work of the Spirit. The world around recognises God’s work in human life and character very well and the whole world has heard of the faith of Corinthians in Jesus. The “confidence” Paul speaks of is the assured conversion of the Corinthians under the diaconate of His ministry – a splendid extension of work begun with the Macedonian call.

DEACONS OF THE GOSPEL ARE GOD’S WATER-CARRIERS 5-11

“We are not sufficient to **calculate the interest** as of ourselves now, but our sufficiency is of God who has made us sufficient as deacons of a **new covenant.**”

Paul puts himself and the others in the place of the **servants** as in John 2 where *attendants* at the Cana marriage feast prefigure *deacons* and heralds of the union of Christ and His church – breathless with wonder that they should be used. The servants in *John2* could not fathom the largesse. The story developed into a parable of church. Paul like the *water pot deacons* ministered the word of God as he preached Christ crucified – thrilled that in Corinth too God changed water into wine. His joyous story was – a people of the new covenant were emerging from the old.

1. TRANSFORMATION IN YESTERDAY’S WORLD 12-18

“If the ministry of death engraved in the stones of the law was created in glory so that the sons of Israel were not able to gaze on the face of Moses on account of the glory of his face that faded away – how much more is the ministry of the Spirit in the circle of glory. For if the ministry of **judicial condemnation** was glorious how much more does the **ministry of righteousness** overflow or outflank it in glory. Moses’ self conscious sharing in glory has no glory in himself compared to the overshooting or surpassing glory. That which was conscious of passing away (*the law*) dies – that which continues (the church) remains in the circle of glory.” **The transformation of one man** –Moses-who experienced redemption and the Spirit upon him was a limited sharing of the glory that was to follow. Now in the church **surpassing transformation** is a living reality.

2. TRANSFORMATION BY THE LORD, THE SPIRIT 17

“While we hold **such a hope** we *consult the Lord in confidence or confidence such as we might impose in a physician or friend or respected solicitor* **χρωμεθα**. Paul says it is not like Moses who veils his face – in order that the sons of Israel should not keep gazing at the end of that which was passing away. Moses’ radiance as it faded became something of a phenomenon. But their *thoughts* **νοηματα** were made a veil – want of experience of Jesus and the new birth amongst Jews is spoken of as *the veil or covering* **ανακαλυπτομενον** – the Rabbis spoke of such a veil as used for *shame and mourning* – but Paul has in mind the veil of the wife – the Jewish people as a whole were characterised as “not knowing the Lord” as “not joyful and transformed” and Paul adds – “Christ takes it away” as a husband allowing the bride to look at Him full – inviting intimacy.

3. TRANSFORMATION TODAY 18

Paul adds now *today* **ηνικα**, *when the law is read in synagogue, the heart is veiled to Christ*. But even **ηνικα** *in a future point in time (for ηνικα can be used of present or future moments)* when Israel turns to the Lord (*that is – Israel of the future*) the veil will be taken away *all round* **περιαιρεω**. Paul alludes to the whole nation and the stripping away of ignorance of Christ. Then he adds that as of “now” the Lord is the Spirit – and the Spirit is taking the veil away now. Where the Spirit of the Lord is operating in the life of the individual or of the church there is liberty – release and deliverance from darkness and guilt and self rule or legal rule.

But we all as Christians are without such veil as we behold in **the mirror of scripture** (*cf. the reference to Moses’ writing*) the Glory of the Lord, and we are changed from glory to glory exactly as Christ would do it by **απο** the Lord the Spirit (*that is, by work of the Holy Spirit – originating at Pentecost and doing His transforming work using the word of God and promoting in us a desire to seek His face by prayer.*)

THE SACTIFYING WORK

In *Romans 6.13* and *Romans 8. 5, 9, 14* and *Romans 12.1-2* Paul proposes a laying of the life on the altar and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life to effect this **transformation**. It is a sanctifying work-which Paul approaches from a different angle here. Nevertheless we clearly see the element of “sacrifice” in *Romans* and the very same element in *Moses* – who could only approach God with sacrifice as he entered the tabernacle. In addition the heart work of the Spirit is implicit in holiness

CHAPTER 4 “Jars of Clay”

(1)HOW IS MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHED? THE HOLY SPIRIT IS KEY TO MINISTRY 1-6

“Through the transforming work of the Spirit of God we have this ministry” Paul says. “According to this work of God we do not lose heart” (*NIV*) or “we are not faint-hearted”. He adds “we speak out against (*or*) renounce hidden acts of shame”. In teaching and practice of the word of God Paul will not *use trickery, deceptive methods or any available device* **δολος**. Christians are to teach the truth clearly – commending it to the conscience of people of every race as in the presence of God. The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of buoyancy and sincerity and a calling “filled with the Spirit”.

IF OUR GOSPEL IS HIDDEN

The sadness is that if it has been hidden (*or veiled*) by our living – the lost suffer.

(a) **Satan**, the God of this world, **can hide it** – blinding the *fast thinking* of unbelievers so that the photo light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should not beam into the mind – and the image of God be revealed to them. Satan’s method is to shine other brilliant light upon them so they see little else and flit past the gospel.

(b) **We can hide it** – if we herald ourselves – and not Christ Jesus as king. So we must be servants of the message at all times.

God who once for all spoke light into the dark world can once for all shine into our hearts the knowledge of **Gods glory in Christ’s uplifted radiant face** – the face of obedience to the Father’s will – and by grace shines into our lives that joy that characterised the uplifted face of Jesus at baptism. This is the unadulterated joy of living obedient to God’s will.

(2) INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION 7-15

CHRIST’S INVESTMENT OF LOVE ENABLES MINISTRY IN OUR “JARS OF CLAY”

Our lives like jars are vulnerable, prone to brokenness. The image suits service and *diakoneia*. The following is a paraphrase: –

“We have this treasure in pottery utensils. The overriding dynamic is God’s not ours. His is the spiritual investment and wealth.”

In everything *we stretch ourselves under pressure and burdens* – but we are not *cramped by our own anxieties (middle voice verbs θλιβομαι & στενοχωρομαι)*. We are *in want of resources* but we are not in great difficulty and doubt as to money **απορουμενοι, εξαπορουμενοι**. We feel the brunt of persecution but we are not left behind **διωκομαι, εγκαταλειπομαι** (as dead) (or) forsaken by the Lord (Hebrews 13.5) that is, we feel the Lord’s presence. We are being thrown down or abandoned but not ruined or vanishing off the scene **καταβαλλομαι, απολλυμι**. We always carry around in our bodies the deathlike condition of the Lord Jesus, that the spring-like life of the lord Jesus might be manifest in our bodies. We are always handed over to death that the life of Jesus may appear in our mortal body.”

(3) FAITH MAKES MINISTRY POSSIBLE -FAITH INVESTMENTS YIELD HIGH Cf. v13ff

*Spirit of faith come down, reveal the things of God
And make to us the godhead known and witness to the blood*

The result of Paul’s investment is that death is active in the apostle’s life and life is evident in the saints. Paul has the same Spirit of faith of the writer who said, “I have believed so I spoke”. He loved the Lord – he came through many sorrows and love lifted him to continue to minister and confess the name of the Lord – just as He lifted David. The Psalm quoted is 116.10 and David is that writer. Seeing that He who raised our Lord Jesus will also raise us through Jesus and present us, at the redemption of our bodies, by his side and in His presence (*as at conversion bride was introduced to her bridegroom by Paul*). For all things are on your account, that grace being supplied on the winning (or) thanksgiving of many **might overflow** to the glory of God. So Paul looks forward to the day of the Lord and the reward of very great

interest on the *investment* of his life in ‘the spiritual futures’ market – multitudes of Greeks in Glory.

(4) THE HOPE OF GLORY MAKES MINISTRY POSSIBLE-WE DO NOT LOSE HEART 16-18

Though the outside jar – the external flesh should fail – the inside spirit is renewed daily. The momentary burden of pressure is achieving an eternal weight of glory that far outstrips the burden. While we aim not at the seen but the unseen as yet for the seen is momentary but the unseen eternal.

Paul has the proper “purpose” or aim **σκοπος**. **He is like a runner who has his eye on the finishing post.**

*Sing the wondrous love of Jesus; sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed He'll prepare for us a place*

*While we walk the pilgrim pathway clouds may overspread the sky;
But when travelling days are over, not a shadow not a sigh.*

*Onward to the prize before us; soon His beauty we'll behold,
Soon the pearly gates will open, we shall treat the streets of gold*

*When we all get to heaven what a day of rejoicing that will be
When we all see Jesus we'll sing and shout the victory.*

E.E Hewitt's gospel song based on Isaiah 51

CHAPTER 5 The “New creature”

THE TEMPORARY TABERNACLE 1-3

None of us is immune from the sting of death – but the Christian can face it with assurance. This is especially so since judgment that follows death presents serious spiritual concern and here only the gospel yields real hope. All of us need forgiveness because none of us is immune from the subtle intrusion of sin. Forgiveness comes with a right relationship to God through the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever human longevity, without Christ man is lost; however brief our life span – when we have the “earnest of the Spirit” ours is the anchorage of hope and confidence that we have a “building architected by God” awaiting in the heavenlies. We have every reason to be confident of this “architecture” – modelled on Christ.

OUR EARTHLY BODY –MODEL OF THE LORD'S

The statement on the “body” here represents a development of the doctrine of man “the image of God” in *2 Corinthians 4.4*

“We know”, says Paul with conviction, “that upon the taking down of the body tent we have a house architected without hands by God – eternal in the heavens” It is of interest what is the exact base of this certainty – apparently not the *John 14* statement- which does, however, hold out promise of “places to stay” and supports the “mansion” idea that has gone out of vogue perhaps too easily. The grouping of the apostles in heaven must be instructive on the nature of our residence in the heavenly home. A more definitive base of this certitude is *Mark 14.58* with *John 2 21-22* –

where the Lord describes His body as a temple to be rebuilt. His body needed only to be restored as a temple ours needs to be changed from a tent to a temple – since it holds all the decay of fallen ness naturally within.

WE SIGH 4

We sigh about ourselves στεναζομεν and long over what is absent or lost επιποθεω – until we are “in and over clothed” with our fixed dwelling οικητηριον which is from heaven. The little particle γε in the original governs the phrase-it means *at least* leaving this life does not concern so much for we will be clothed with our body from heaven. Job sees himself “returning naked to his ancestors-mere bones to the tomb” – but we shall appear “clothed” before Christ – Hallelujah! I like the positive “because when” of the NIV – this catches Paul’s **certainty** – although the emphasis is on his appreciation of the **joy** now ours through Christ’s life & teaching that makes the contrast with Job in dying.

Our sighs are not just for what we have not yet received but through the weight of present burdens – yet we are not willing with set purpose to be unclothed just now-we want to be clothed. The diffidence is the physical pain and unwelcome experience of dying and parting. The best wish would be καταποσις gulp” or “swallowing of the bitter pill” – *death swallowed by life as in the rapture*. So it would be quick and we would be home with the Lord.

BRIDGE OF SIGHS

In *Venice* there is such a bridge – *Ponte dei Sospiri* which connects the *Doges’ palace* (*Adjoining St Mark’s*) with the prison. It dates from the 17th Century and owes its name to the lamentations of prisoners who caught their final glimpse of the sky from it as they were conducted across it to their place of execution. It holds a mirror up to the experience of death.

GOD’S WORKMANSHIP 5

Our encouragement is that God made it this way. God has prepared us for this very thing-and now Paul goes back to *Chapter 1.22* – in a discourse that is remarkably developed to show that the earnest of the Spirit αρραβων makes us always bold – so we don’t need to travel along through life quivering in fear.

TRAVELLING ON THE WAVE OF “DESIRING JOURNEY’S END” 6-9

Besides this “while we dwell in the body we are travelling in a foreign land away from the Lord” (*for we are walking by faith not by sight*). We see ourselves as far from home – whereas others without faith are at home only in this world and know no other.

We are *bold as soldiers* θαρσεω .This conveys the notion of being bold enough to venture on to battle sin & Satan and go on “cheerfully”. It is instructive to read the pages of *Pilgrim’s Progress* on the conversation with the “shining ones” who conduct Christian and Hopeful to the river and promise to meet them on the other side. Christian says to Hopeful, “You have been hopeful ever since I knew you – go forward and leave me” Christian asked for a boat, a bridge, a companion, another way – but Hopeful’s word “I feel the bottom and it is good” kept him going – the better the faith the shallower the river. For the Christian Christ will be with us. Pilgrim’s text was *Isaiah 42.3* .That great allegory ends “The King’s trumpeters clothed in white with melodious noises, made the heavens to echo with their sound”. Paul says (v8) we “love the honour” of pleasing the Lord either in the body or out of the body. A labourer φιλοτιμος is one who has a *jealous ambition and eagerness to*

strive for an end. The Romans desired to step from glory here to the gods. Our ambition should be to be at a stretch in that day.

THE BEMA OF CHRIST 10

We must all appear cf. 1.12 & 16.12 it is essential – *right in before* **εμπροσθεν** the throne of Christ. To stand in Philippi or Corinth before the Bema and muse – where convicted persons trembled is awesome. One would be within a few metres of one's judge and between his attendant soldiers – and in chains. For us it will not be like this but we will be facing the Lord's gaze in exactly the same way as yonder where the Greeks faced their judges. Each will give account of good or evil done. The purpose is to receive **κομιζω**. Various understood the word may be "to bury the corpse of the wrongs" or "to receive the prize of the rights". On that day the Lord will take our last burdens away – engendering joy and hope and love. Though the nature of judgment is awesome, just being there is heaven begun – separation ended!

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION – ITS PRINCIPLE 11-12

Christians are well aware of the divine appraisal – that we will have to appear before God – and it is our task to persuade men to fear and serve the Lord. Paul is saying – we know both options. We know that to fear the Lord now brings the earnest or guarantee of escaping fearful judgement. Paul hopes the Corinthians are equally clear, not just in theology but in living. He is not commending himself but giving reason to rejoice in the reality of his life and message in contrast to the loud boast and mere appearance of godliness in others. "If we for our part are astonished or change our appearance it is for God's sake; if we show ourselves sound temperate prudent and moderate, it is for you." Paul may rebuke them on the Lord's behalf – equally he will encourage them by exemplary living.

CONSTRAINING LOVE – CONCERTED WORK AND WITNESS 13-17

The Love of Christ "*keeps us from falling to pieces*" **συνεχει** or it might be rendered "*keeps the church together*" or again "*keeps us rowing in tandem*" – I think the basic meaning is that Jesus' love keeps us under the influence of His Lordship as people who have determined that in his substitutionary death is our purpose now and joy eternally.

- (a) "If one died in place of us all then all were dying".
- (b) "And He died **on behalf of** all so that they who live should not live for themselves but **on behalf of Him** who died & rose for them. To quote *Sir Robert Anderson* here "Substitution is not a truth for the unsaved" In preaching Christ is presented objectively to faith – *Acts 10 34-43 and 10.44* whereas in teaching his identity with the believer is stressed.

His death for us naturally places on under the constraint of love – we want to live for Him – to **row under his coxing** – to submit to his Lordship – and this is absolutely as it should be.

There are two results: –

- (a) We from this present do not "acknowledge a debt" to men according to the flesh- If we have also had the privilege to know Christ in the flesh, we do not know him **ουκετι** (like the Greek term **παμπαν** it means fully, wholly). The expression compares with *President Ronald Reagan's* famous phrase, "You ain't seen nothin' yet". So even those who knew Jesus in his ministry would be overwhelmed by His present glory – cf. Paul in Acts 9.

(b) If anyone is **in Christ** he is *new creation*. We relate to the world Christ came to set up **καινη κτισις**. The archaic has passed – the age of grace is here and the age of glory will presently dawn for us. This wonderful “bond” of being “in Christ” is explored thoroughly in Ephesians. That epistle introduces us to a different economy, an eternal covenant, the “one new man” which the Lord envisaged and planned before the world took shape.

RECONCILIATION 18-21

1. All things are from God *who reconciled* us to Himself through Jesus Christ. He changed our enmity for friendship – our captivity for freedom.

2. He gave us the ministry – the “*diakoneia*” of reconciliation – just as God was in Christ changing enmity to friendship – bringing his enemies over by love so He has placed in our circle the word of reconciliation – AGAPE.

The “One Step Forward” (*Agape*) ministry of the *Rev. Bryan Gilbert* set this out in a fivefold scheme: – *Avoid criticism, Go visit, Attempt to reach one, Pray for others, Encourage leaders*. That mnemonic shows one helpful way to routine our serving.

3. On Christ’s behalf Paul acts as a revered ambassador, as agent of God, begging on Christ’s behalf that they seek humbly to be reconciled to God. Paul adds a further aspect of the case for acting humbly in this way – “Jesus who had no personal involvement as a sinner –nor in act nor word nor thought – *He invented substitution for sin* **εποιησεν** (*indicative not middle or passive voice*) **υπερ ημων αμαρτιων** on our behalf that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. If we go back to the book of Moses we read of this invention everywhere-it is in the “lamb slain at Passover” the “sparrow to cleanse the leper” “the sin offering” “Cursed is he who hangs upon a cross”. God had something invented to take the penalty for man his beloved. This was the primeval inventiveness of love and its forecast is in Apostolic words, “A lamb slain before the foundation of the world” *Lk.11.50, John 17.24, Eph.1.4, Heb.4.3, 1Pet.1.20, Rev.13.8* as in the creation phrase, “Let us make man through sacrifice” Hebrew **hc**]

Hans Windisch in his commentary takes this substitution back to *Leviticus 16* and the scapegoat. *FF Bruce* sees Christ’s substitution as a fulfilment of Isaiah 6. In truth the work of reconciliation is the fundamental pivot in the design of Mosaic Law & priesthood and the base-line of *prophetic revelation* and hope – the grand decision that sparked creation as we know it – disposed creation towards renewal and reconciliation.

Sir Robert Anderson in his book “The gospel and its ministry” indicates that the millennium and the “new heaven and new earth” are both entailed in the pleasure of God in the cross of Christ.

CHAPTER 6 “Fellow workers”

PROPHECY OF GRACE FOR GREECE AND THE NATIONS 1-3

The reference to the 49th of *Isaiah* with its “Listen O Isles” and to **hxr** (*Hebrew*) God’s **grace** or favour coming through Messiah is especially apt and has a bearing on the visit of Greeks to Jesus *John12.20* and Paul’s ministry to Corinth. Paul urges the Corinthians to “work for Jesus” – otherwise they are receivers and not givers. The thrust of *Isaiah 49.8* is that Israel received spiritual reinforcement and salvation and

they should commit to the spiritual battle at a moment when the Lord has opened the way of faith to the nations.

FULL-ORBED DIAKONEIA IS THE STRENGTH OF RECONCILIATION 4-10

True service will not “put even one cause of stumbling in anyone’s path.” This means God loves true service **διακονια** cf. “Good and faithful servant”. “We commend ourselves as ministers of God”, says Paul. He details **eighteen “ministry” areas** .

(A) Diakonia and the will to learn to serve – *Have I the functionality? A life of grace at work? Serving in or with...*

1. **υπομονη** The primary grace is “patience” – being like a strong sword – able to sustain blows.

Notice that the next testing areas are repetitive-though victorious once – we must battle the same opponent again and again

2. **θλιψις** *Pressure of a pinching shoe or of many cares* Life is like the beggar “leaning on many doorposts” or “burdened”.

3. **αναγκη** constraint either of lack of food or leverage as society applies or even prison and torture as Christians suffer.

4. **στενοχωρια** having but a *small confined area of service or a short time to live and serve*.

5. **πληγαις** The *lightning stroke of calamity or physical handicap* as in the eyes or senses.

6. **φυλακαις** Sleepless guarding of others, or protecting against the evil one – continuous pastoral care.

7. **ακαταστασις** changeable and unsettled times – when men are fickle and feverish.

8. **κοποις** weariness toil and trouble with pain.

9. **αγρυπνια** sleepless nights – as if concerned or praying – cf. Paul & Silas in prison

10. **νηστεια** hunger and fasting.

11. **αγνος** unsullied as to familiar relationships and impartial as to general affairs and holy as to God.

12. **γνωσις** judicial enquiry as to oneself or others, the area of deeper knowledge of others or theoretical questions in dispute.

13. **μακροθυμια** long suffering and unwillingness to get edgy with a particular person

14. **χρηστοτης** the unfeigned and unreckoning or unheeding manner and character

15. **Πνευμα Αγιος** filled with the Holy Spirit residing ungrieved, unquenched. The Greek word for “unquenched” shares its root with *Vesuvius* – the uncap able mountain.

16. **αγαπη ανυποκριτος** showing love that is not a mask but absolute.

17. **λογος αληθεια** openness of speech – not secretive and hidden.

18. **δυναμει θεος** with increase of power in serving – given of God.

(B) Diakonia – its maintenance in good & bad times: three aspects v8 *Have I the tenacity? Have I the will to go on?*

(a) That we have on the right the sword of the word and on the left the shield of faith – armour of righteousness.

(b) That we pursue service amid days of glory and times when we are dishonoured.

(c) That we continue serving despite ill words of discouragement and do not rest on laurels and cease when praised.

(C) Diakonia – not directed by opinion but Christ’s example vv8b-9 does my life display maturity?

1. Thought of as leading others astray – fickle – weaving a scheme – yet faithful to the oracles of God.
2. Though unknown (*middle of the verb is passive in sense*) yet we are read as a book or our writings are known.
3. Though having died – quite literally at Lystra (*and spiritually to self*) yet behold we are alive – with new spiritual life.
4. Though punished and chastened not condemning ourselves as guilty or living under that condemnation.
5. Though feeling pain grief and hurt always rejoicing.
6. Though beggarly poor making many fabulously rich.
7. Though holding nothing masters who control everything – as *jockeys do horses* – with the bridle of teaching cf. James.

THE MOUTH στόμα 11–13

Paul now can say that he has declared the whole truth of how to live towards others – there are no secrets.

He can further say that his heart is wide open as to them.

He can say that he has had deep sympathetic concern for them and asks but the same in return from his dear children.

THE ISSUE RECONCILED – SAFEGUARDS FOR THE FUTURE SET IN PLACE 14-18

Do not become yoked to different people who don’t believe. Paul emphasises the *otherness* ἄλλοτριος of those who don’t share faith in Christ – they are another household than that of faith. He asks four questions illustrative of his contention

1. What partnership has righteousness with denial of law?
2. What common abiding has light with darkness? One expels the other
3. What symphony has Messiah Jesus with Belial – the Satan of the Dead Sea Scrolls?
4. What common foundation has God’s temple with idols

THE WORLDLY YOKE DISPLEASES GOD 19-20

“Don’t you know that your (plural) body is the temple of the living God – the Holy Spirit is in you (plural) as God said?” Here Paul quotes the scriptures “I will dwell close to them and walk among them, I will be their God, they my people”. This is a combination-quotation from *Lev.26.12, Jer. 32.38 & Ezek.37.27* reminding them of Egypt’s yoke broken and referring also to the “new heart” of the New Covenant and the New Age of dry bones living.

Again Paul quotes *Isaiah52.11 and Ezek20.34* which speaks of “God brings again Zion” and “being sanctified before the heathen”. These verses are applied to Corinth – a Gentile city and the reason is given in a further quote from *2 Samuel 7.14* – the discipline of God over his son of the covenant **David** is akin to the discipline to be expected by **those adopted** under the New Covenant. God has no double standards for Jew and Gentile. The Christian is to resist the Egypt-style yoke of the world. Moses preferred to “suffer hardship with Gods people than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

CHAPTER 7

“A man of candour”

The chapter is of a rare autobiographical nature. Paul for once tells us a good deal about his inner responses to the difficulties he faces with the care of the sophisticated but disputant church at Corinth.

Paul, bold to **redress** the Corinthian **error** in a previous letter, ventures to **open his heart** & comes to **salute their character**. *Boris Yeltsin* once said of *Gorbachev*, “I almost completely trust him”. Having given bold advice to the church Paul feels for their heart and discovers to his delight that they have responded with moral & spiritual excellence to his challenge. The chapter is Like *Rembrandt’s* portrait of the surgeons of Amsterdam – a most detailed post-mortem – perhaps the most intimate exposure of his thinking in the Pauline Corpus.

THE PROMISES 1

The apostle grounded his forward movement in the epistle in God’s loving plan and a purpose. God promised to live at the centre of the Jews and He would live among Christians alike – God loved the isles of Greece and bade them listen; God treats Christians as His family as much as Israel under the former covenant. So Corinthians can be assured of God’s love. He then encourages the church to purify themselves as NT Levites from every stain. **μολυσμος** is used of debauchery – and it means *that which spoils both body and spirit*. Today we speak of things holistic. The Spirit which should worship is brought low with ill conduct. Paul calls them to live up to the ancient oracle of *Isaiah 52* – to see God’s vision for them, to bring their lives in offering as they live wisely god-fearing lives in the light of God our Saviour and judge.

1. PAUL REVEALS BALANCE IN THINKING ABOUT OTHERS 1-4

“Give us *a field of labour* among you. ... We have done no-one wrong; we have ruined no-one; we have overstepped in no-one’s life”. Paul is not going over old wounds to make them feel guilty. He reminds them of his earlier remark that **they were in his heart**, in death and life. Now the apostle goes further. He recognises the total frankness of his address to them, his very loud boast about them, how he is filled with consolation about them; overwhelmed with joy amid all his pressure or burden. He desires to continue his good work in their midst.

2. PAUL REVEALS THE PRESSURE-ALL TIME LOWS AND HIGHS 5-9

The Macedonian call was an outstanding spiritual moment in his life-but stepping on Macedonian soil took him into unparalleled pressure. No relaxation – no *fun times* **ανεσις**–*battles* **μαχαι** outside – not the agony of personal contest but contention demanding skill in leading the Christians in a hostile setting . Phobias within-inside he was “as one running from battle-terrified”. Here is another of Paul’s *But God’s* – God who comes alongside the lowly – who are on the floor – literally *carpeted* **ταπεινος** comforted us in the visit of Titus which is compared to Christ’s coming in the parousia. Paul rises suddenly from *abysmal depths* of pathos to *stunning heights* of joy as he compares the uplift of Titus’ coming to Pentecost – the *coming of the Holy Ghost* – the **παρακλησις**. Titus had three comments: –

- (1) There is the *overwhelming fond regret* **επιποθησις** with love.
- (2) There is *lamentation* **οδυρμος** for the return of Paul.
- (3) There is tremendous *warmth* **ζηλος** of concern for him – cheering him yet more.

3. PAUL SPEAKS WITH GREAT CANDOUR 10

There is a double use of **οτι** in v.9 which indicates that Paul is actually quoting to the Corinthians his inner thinking; for the Greek **οτι** serves virtually as do our quotation marks. Paul states, “If I made them sad in that letter, it was just for an hour”. He adds, “I rejoice” and quotes his inner thinking with the **HOTI οτι** “Not because they were sorrowful but **-οτι** because they sorrowed not to ruefulness and hardening but rather change of mind, and their sorrow was on account of scripture and the Spirit and the word of God **κατα Θεον** so that they suffered no loss through me”

4. PAUL HOLDS US THIS REPENTANCE **μετανοια** AS A MODEL 11

Sorrow as **God intended** and examples it *Lam.1.12, Isa.53.3, Matt. 26.37* is productive. God “repented that he made man on the earth” “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” – *Gen.6.6*. God repented Israel groaned without a leader – so he raised Judges; God repented that he made Saul king so he raised David; God repented as to Nineveh’s destruction – *Jonah 4.2* and gave a revival. In all these cases **GRACE** or *mercy rejoiced against judgment*.

So the divine model of repentance is **change of mind** to adopt **the right line of conduct – without regret** – and with **the will to save or spare** the righteous. God prepares or accomplishes this by varying the way he treats men but always with righteousness as his aim. The Corinthians changed the way they handled the unruly member and the change came from hearts that loved and sought the right. Sorrow **Αυπη** is *deep annoyance*; **μεταμελεια** is *continued regret* and unwillingness to *change* but **μετανοια** is a *new direction of mind* on one’s relationship with God or man.

5. PAUL GIVES AN ANALYSIS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS & REPENTANCE 11

Paul reminds them what “sorrow” or “annoyance” self-addressed in and of itself – achieved in the Corinthian church

- (a) *What haste and study there was among them.*
- (b) *Alternative defence – not of our action – but of God’s will among us.*
- (c) *Alternative ground for displeasure annoyance or irritation.*
- (d) *Alternative deep fear-of displeasing God not men*
- (e) *Alternative fond regret – i.e. not harsh regret – not self-regarding but with regard to others.*
- (f) *Alternative warmth or zeal.*
- (g) *Alternative protection (vengeance only in the sense of defence of right – cf. the cities of refuge).*

In everything the leaders at Corinth commended themselves in discipline re-the incestuous relationship in the church.

6. PAUL STATES HIS CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE – HIS MUST 12

Paul had to write not because of the offender or the person offended against – i.e. his main thrust was not in defence of either – but so that our study and alacrity on your behalf in our reply to you before God should have been made apparent to you. Here is the crux – Paul set the complicated matter before God, brought in the word and sought the Lord’s face. Now he tells them so in a detailed explanatory letter. (*NB Here I differ from the NIV rendering “that before God you could see how devoted to us you are”*. I do not think this to be what Paul is explaining. He is, rather, explaining his own motive and position in a past letter not their feelings at the present towards him.

The AV “*That our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you*” I view as valid) The apostle adds with relief, “Through **this** (not the “sorrow”, not the “alacrity”, not the “return of Titus”) but **through the candour of clarification on his own part in this new letter** he and others with him are comforted *in addition to* **επι** your comfort – i.e. your **first letter** imploring my aid – the initial reason for the letter that is not extant – which “hurt for an hour” (Perhaps the NIV is avuncular here and in transliterating” *By all this*” bundles the detail of Paul’s purpose to explain himself in detail away from view).

7. PAUL BRINGS HIS COMMENT ON HIS RESPONSE TO A CLIMAX 13-16

He tells us that he rejoiced yet more overwhelmingly **περισσοτερω** – this word is the military term for victory – used again and again in Corinthians. Joy tops sorrow as grace tops sin. He adds concerning his boast of Titus to them that he has nothing to be ashamed of – as everything he told Titus concerning them has equally come out plainly. The result-his sympathies are overwhelmingly for them-he has been won to that deep response by their obedience to God’s will and the fear and trembling with which he was received. Paul finishes-..... “**I rejoice that in everything I can confidently venture among you.**” Cp. v2

CHAPTER 8 “Liberality”

The touching challenge of poor Macedonians set before the Corinthians in order to prompt them to get priorities right and bring “others” to the forefront of thought.

TERTULLIAN OF CARTHAGE ON “CARE FOR OTHERS”

“We do have our money-box, contributed to by those who wish, and who are able, once a month. The money is used, not for feasting or drinking, but to help the poor, orphaned children, the old, the shipwrecked, Christians sent to forced labour mine, or exiled in the islands, or shut up in prison. This is why people say of us ‘See how these Christians love one another’”.

1. THEY GAVE OUT OF SEVERE POVERTY 1

“I want you to recognize (**γνωριζω**) as intimate friends, my brothers” (“*friends*” not “*servants*” for Paul has revealed his plans and needs to them) the grace of God that has been given in the Macedonian churches”. The apostle states something timeless “in all the *testing*” (**δοκιμασις** a description of “*dashing iron in water over & over*”) of tribulation the “overflow” – *that word again* – the overflow or victory of their joy and their **profound beggarly poverty** increased towards the fabulous riches of their provision (**απλος** Paul compares them to sailors on an un-seaworthy vessel – they live fearlessly dangerously –with little personal means yet there they go liberally supporting the poor of Jerusalem-bringing what they themselves need to help others)

2. THEY GAVE ABOVE THEIR MEANS 2-4

They literally “took it on themselves” to give beyond their power to earn and replace. **Voluntary** here means “after much beseeching” begging to choose us to have the favour or pleasure and the share of the ministry which was for the saints. They wanted the apostles to be given part of the collection as was customary for Rabbis to receive.

3. THEY GAVE THEMSELVES ALONG WITH THEIR GIFTS 5-6

Unexpectedly they first gave themselves to the Lord to us *absolutely following God's will* **δια θεληματος Θεου**.

A precedent and model was found unsurpassed until this day. When Paul sent Titus to complete the collection he began a year ago it was that model that example emphasising life “on the altar” dedicated – the true base of unstinting liberality.

THE TOUGH CHALLENGE OF EXCELLENCE 7-8

Paul invoked the principle of “the highest good” or excellence. He challenged Corinth', Christians as they excelled to overflowing in faith and oratory and knowledge and every area of mental discipline and also in their love towards apostolic leaders-that they build up and outflank in giving also. The word **περισσεω** turns up here again. It would seem Paul wants to see Corinth become the church that lives to overflow with joy faith speech knowledge and now giving – a **reservoir for worldwide Christianity**. Paul is not speaking by commandment but through their study and will to be swift as others the genuine love of the church is tested.

THE TIMELESS CHALLENGE OF JESUS “STOOP” TO SAVE 9-15

The supreme model is our Lord. “You know the **grace of our Lord** **χαρις** *kindness, favour, grace* who though so rich – yet for you became so poor that you by his poverty might become rich” This speaks of entering into riches which can only gradually be known. Paul gives them a *marker or target* **γνωμη** to pass. He says “Let's see you match what you desired to do and do first as an example in AD56 - match that in AD57.”

Now *at this moment* **νυν** complete the task so that as the ready kindness of your willingness may be matched with finishing your gift from what you have – for if the ready kindness is there the gift is acceptable in accordance with what we have not what we do not (*yet*) have. Paul wants not to pile pressure on them while others have it easy – but to find a balance and make up the shortfall of others by their **overflow** (*that word again*). Under this principle the plenty of others would supply them during need – he quotes *Ex. 16.18* “He who had much had no surfeit and he who has little not too little.”

THE CREDENTIALS OF THREE EMISSARIES 16-23

1. Titus: 16

- a. A man into whose heart God has put **σπουδη** – the serious purpose and timely speed associated with study
- b. He received the request to visit – and ready for a speedier start he went out voluntarily already to you.

2. Luke 9 (The brother whose praise is in all the churches) 19

Luke, who comes to mind – also the enlightened guess of *Matthew Henry*

- a. His praise in the gospel is in all the churches – Luke had written a copy of the gospel which would itself give him widespread acceptance.
- b. The churches voted that he should go out with us with this favour which we administer to God's glory and by your wish.

So Paul's team as they “bring this together” want to avoid any criticism of their vigour *and maturity* **αδροτης** in the administration. They are taking every good precaution not only before God but in the sight of men.

3. **Apollos:** cf. 1.12 & 16.12 22

- a. A brother of proven purpose and alacrity – proved in many circles and oftentimes.
- b. Now more keen than ever because of his great confidence in you.

General commendation: Titus is an intimate and co-labourer. These brothers are “apostles of the churches” a credit to Christ – an honour for Him – what he expects in those He sends. Paul urges Corinth to prove to them their love and prove Paul's high esteem for Corinth correct so that the wider church can recognise that they are outstanding in discipleship.

CHAPTER 9 “Sowing”

THE COMMENDATION

In the structure of the epistle since Paul first stated his “boast” *each major statement is a corollary of the boast.*

- a. 1.12-1.22 Paul believes at the last they will boast of *the overflow of Gods grace* in Paul as he boasts of their character.
- b. 1.23-2.4 Paul states will not “lord it” but develop “fellow workers” out of **overflowing love.**
- c. 2.5-2.11 Paul advises forgiveness lest a man be choked by *the dangerous overflow of sorrow.*
- d. 2.12-4.6 Paul shows the *ministry of righteousness overflows* that of condemnation (3.9) cf. Moses fading glory.
- e. 4.7-7.16 Paul amid hardships building desires *thanksgiving to overflow* to God's glory 4.15 –as *his joy overflows* 7.4.
- f. 8.1-8.14 Paul balances the *overflowing Macedonian joy* with the *overflowing plenty of the sad Corinthians* 8.2 &14.

BURDENS MANY GRACE ABOUNDING 1-5

The apostle therefore gives us a synopsis of the epistle thus far. Now he speaks more dispassionately diverting to the care of the Jews.

He says it overwhelms him – it *is an unnecessary overflow of burden* – not useless or redundant to bypass dire human need is plainly wrong – but the facts being accepted and the desire to help established as shown by last year's instant response.

So the brothers were despatched as a preparatory delegation – so the boast of Paul would be confirmed in a magnificent Corinthian response to sharing the burden of the mother church at Jerusalem – when Paul and perhaps some Macedonians with him arrived to forward the gift to the Jews. *The keynote here is “prepare”.* Giving in this matter is like harvesting – it demands that the farmer prepare well; and it is akin to sowing and reaping in its unsparing nature and yield.

Paul now picks up a word Peter used at Jerusalem's first Pentecost (*Acts 3.18*) – it is the word **προκαταγγελλω** v5. Just as the coming of the Spirit was promised as a blessing on Israel and the world so the call of the Greeks (*Isaiah 42.2 & 30 et alii, esp. Ps 72.10; also Isaiah 49.8 & 2Cor. 6.2*) and their beneficial gift aid – a long predicted (*biblical*) blessing for Jerusalem was being realised –a “blessing” a “good word well in accord with prophecy” and not just a “greedy grasping of role of big giver”.

Note: I do not think that the Corinthians were being briefed that they were niggardly but rather that grace and humility in giving was being encouraged by reference to their place in history and role to help the saints in this their opportune time.

SOWING AND OVERFLOWING 6-10

To sow sparingly is to reap sparsely, to sow after blessings or *the interest from* blessings is to harvest *interest from* sowing.

There is a basic predictive choice for each to make, not out of sorrow for others or their need as it impinges but out of cheerful grace – God loves that. God is able to cause every grace to overflow towards the Greeks that always in everything they would need no imports **αυταρκειαν** but ***overflow in every good work***.

Here Paul quotes *Psalms 112.9* of **Christ** who “sowed so broadcast, gave to the poor and His righteousness remains for ever.

He who richly supplies the seed of His word (*as the rich Greeks financed the chorus*) for the sower and bread for the eaters (*i.e. spiritual food for Christians*) is doing so to fill up your supplies of the word (*seed*) and to multiply those born to righteousness among you (*i.e. converts*).

GOD ENRICHES US SO THAT WE CAN GIVE TO OTHERS 11-12

He now uses again a concept used of Macedonia “You will be in everything enriched *to the point of recklessness* **απλοτητα** (*i.e. putting to sea in an unseaworthy craft*), which through our ministry will work out in thanksgiving to God. The ministry of this great public service is not only to go before and rise above the need of the saints-but it is to be the trigger of great ***overflowing thanksgiving*** to God.

THE LORD GIVES GRACE AND NEW WEAPONS TO DEFEND HIS PEOPLE 13-14

Here Paul saw a coming crisis being averted in the years after 57AD. Indeed not till the Roman siege in 69-70 did crisis re-emerge. The testing of Greek solidarity in ministry as they show obedience to the captaincy of Christ **υποταγη** v13 in their confession of the gospel and the recklessness of their generosity in fellowship with Jew and gentile means these all glorify God. And in prayer they have deep intercessory desires for you because you are a new instrument of Gods grace for warfare **υπερβαλλουσαν** (*the word is used of the modern Roman military sling of those days – the equivalent of the German V2 or doodlebug of the 2nd War in NT times and also a term used for an outstanding discus throw*). In comments on the Ephesian epistle this word is shown to have strong associations in Pauline teaching with “prayer” and the “long distance” intercession of our ascended Lord.

THANK YOU JESUS 15

Paul finishes “Thanks be to God for His gift which is *way above our power to put into words* – unspeakable – above and *out of the range of words* or as *Leuski* has it “beyond even Paul as a guide to lead us through in detail.”

CHAPTER 10 “Bounds of Authority”

1. MANY CALCULATE WORLDLY REACTION. PAUL OBEYS CHRIST’S AUTHORITY 1-3

Paul characterises himself as “mild” as opposed to passionate, as suiting himself in approach to the yielding manner of Christ when he (*Paul*) visits in Corinth; yet is he confident as a soldier when absent.

Paul begs that there be no need for soldier *like attitude* when he comes to Corinth. He reckoned on exercising boldness in respect of certain who *calculate* that he walks after the flesh. There is in these words nothing furious but a meek man

Paul has to live in the world as we all must – but our *active service as soldiers* of Christ is not worldly.

CHRISTIAN WEAPONS 4-6

- 1 *“The weapons of our campaign are not worldly but mighty through God to destroy citadels” i.e. ancient holds of evil*
- 2 *Christian weapons like love and faith defy logic and reasoning by propositions*
- 3 *Christian weapons can hold against everything proud that raises itself against the knowledge of God*
- 4 *Christian weapons can take every design and perception into obedience to Christ.*
- 5 *Christian soldiers are ready to maintain the right against contumacy once obedience is in place.*

2. CALCULATE OVER AGAIN 7-10

Could it be that the Corinthians look at appearance? If any is confident he is a Christian, let him think this out again by himself or by his own accord, that as he is Christ’s so are we Christ’s. Paul adds, “If I have made any *overflowing boast* of our authority (*which the Lord gave us to build you up and not destroy you*) I will not be made ashamed – lest I may seem to frighten you through the letters. For they say ‘The letters are weighty and strong but his visit in the body is weak and his word an object of contempt.’

3. LET SUCH CALCULATE WE ARE PRESENT BY LETTER 11-12

Paul wants them to think of it like this; though *he is absent they should take the word in the letter to represent what he would say if present*. He is not bold to approve himself as genuine or compare himself with others who commend themselves.

THE CANON OR RULE OF OVERFLOWING 13

Those who measure themselves by themselves or compare themselves with themselves are not aware of the valueless model they are using.

Paul will not boast disproportionately, but according to the measure of the rule where God has given allotted ministry – and that reach or *success in projects* *εφικεσθαι* extended to Corinth.

PIONEER OF THE GOSPEL

Paul defends himself against overstating success as if he had not reached Corinth but his party did first reach Corinth with the gospel v.13 very much as *Amundsen* first reached the South Pole.

Paul avoids boasting outside his own work or of work others are tasked with – but hold out hope that as the faith grows among them there will be very great expansion according to the *rule of overflowing*.

Paul foresees preaching the gospel on the further side of Greece and that can only mean that by AD 57 he had contemplated reaching to what is now Albania and the Italian mainland. He refuses to boast in the boundary line of another's prepared area.

THE COMMENDATION OF THE LORD (*Jeremiah 9.24*)13-18

In terminating this consideration on his BOAST Paul thinks of something grossly sadder than the Corinthian incest. He thinks of the Almighty having to discipline Israel. He refined her, he made her an exile, and he made her ashamed. The only thing left to Israel in the way of boast was to "Know the Lord" who was so kind so just so righteous. So it must be with Corinth under the gospel Paul preached – the Christians must have no other model but Christ and realise that no amount of self-commendation is of use – the only test that matters is the Lord's commendation.

CHAPTER 11 "Dangers encountered"

SUBTLE INFLUENCES CHALLENGED 1-6

It would be an advantage if you would distance yourselves a little from my folly or senselessness. But you did indeed give me space – for I am zealous for you with God's zeal. I was arranging for you to be married to one man – a pure virgin to stand alongside Christ. Paul uses the **αρμοναζω** for he was *attuning* the church to be a perfect spiritual bride. His fear was that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his readiness to do anything *to promote rebellion πανουργια*– so swift ideas of false apostle had destroyed or prejudiced the simplicity that is in Christ.

Paul refers to someone coming preaching another Jesus whom he never heralded; another spirit than his, another gospel than the pure word – he bids them "distance yourself from it." He says, "I reckon I have not come behind the very super apostles" He acknowledges that if he is unskilled **in word** or communication he is not **in knowledge**.

TEACHERS LINE THEIR POCKETS: PAUL LIVES FUGAL 7-15

This is immediately emphasised by his medical and scientific use of the specialist word for *stun or shock*. He can emphasise that his teaching in all aspects has been absolutely clear. He asks, "Did I sin to humble myself that you might be lifted up – when I made known the gospel of God to you freely? He confesses to depriving other churches (*cf. Macedon in their poverty*) taking a salary to minister to you, and though he was in need while with them he made no-one "numb" **v.9 κατεναρκησα** (*the phrase is a rather unusual one drawn from the vocabulary of Hippocrates the father of medicine and related to the then-known action of the electric eel which has power to shock*). Now after a space he tells them how his need in Corinth was met by Macedonian brothers. He remains guarded about being burdensome and yet totally open like Jesus – and no-one in Achaia could defend themselves against this – or *dam up the truth or barricade against this* **Greek φρασσω** – which is Christ's way. Why was it unstoppable – this type of teaching and ministry? "**Because he loved them!**" as God can witness. He lived like that to cut away the resources *or supply-base* **αφορμη** of those who want to be spiritual mercenaries not missionaries. Paul was understood to be genuine so they will be found out for what they are *vv12-13*. These referred to are characterised as lying apostles, crafty workmen, changing their form into apostles of Christ. "You must not wonder" says Paul; "for Satan changed his

form to that of a bright angel” It is no big deal if his servants masquerade as deacons of righteousness, their end judgment according to their works.

DEMUR ON INSPIRATION –PAUL STATES HIS VIEW ON REDRESS AS OPPOSED TO RETALIATION (cf. Social justice) 16-20

“No-one should think of me as a fool” Should the reverse be the case, and if he is taken for a fool, **he will boast of himself** “not inspired boasting”, he adds, for the argument or reality or support of the fool’s boast is **himself**.

“If many boast of heredity – why not me?” A little **tongue-in-cheek** he applauds Corinth for being so sweet, so patient with the unwise and so prudent. “You hold up your hands in surrender or as torchbearers if anyone breaks your spirit, if anyone swallows you, if anyone carries you away; if anyone excites you, if anyone thrashes you on the face” Paul confesses to weakness in that department, as if to say, “I couldn’t hold a candle to your patience and prudence”.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 21-28

I speak as lacking in honour, (*as if to say we have been weak*). But where anyone would be bold (*I speak crazily*), I am bold also. *Paul is honestly indicating that he is very spirited – and in moral characteristics will vie with any in quest of “perfection’s sacred height” especially where courage and daring are concerned – cf. “beasts at Ephesus” and “speech on the steps at Jerusalem” and facing Philosophers at the Areopagus etc, etc.*

(1) Claims to Hebrew pedigree. Jews boast of privilege. Paul has such pedigree – he is a Benjamite – of the seed of David

(2) Claims to diaconate. Paul speaks of his *mania* in this area – for “serving” or **υπερ** diakoneia – taking the message everywhere.

(3) Claims under the offence of the cross. Paul faced **nine** types of harassment, **eight** perils, **seven** debilitating circumstances and **one** constant “anxious care” that others rolled upon him and he rolled upon the Lord cf. *Matthew 6.25ff*. We have absolute evidence in *Philippians 4.6* that **Paul began his solutions of church problems and daily difficulties by prayer** – living by faith & courage. Missionaries of the cross can empathise with the apostle and we all derive much uplift from knowing that the Lord took Paul through perils on sea and land. He survived banditry and quite miraculously the stones of Lystra. He crossed Asia and northern Greece and survived despite the peril of mighty rivers in his pathway. He was cold and hungry and his clothes were inadequate at times and withal the *anxious care* of the churches **μεριμνα** did not daunt him. We say with one voice “Lord give us a double portion of his spirit”. Paul speaks of himself as a *walker οδοπορταις*—a man constantly journeying. The weakness of other brothers affects Paul witness as a soldier of Christ – the failure and scandal that touches others has its answer in Paul as a burnt offering stands in their place.

“IF I MUST BOAST I WILL BOAST IN MY WEAKNESS” 29-32

The apostle acknowledges that he too went through with all he faced very much aware of his weakness and in conscious **fear and trepidation**.

NB. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knows I lie not – the ever blessed one in heaven knows the fear felt, the hazards faced and the genuine vulnerability of Paul—but as a loving heavenly Father the Lord watched over him. This he reinforces with an early incident when he **feared for his life** and escaped by a very simple ploy. Aretas

of Damascus sought to stifle repress and lay hold of Paul but he was able to fly for his life. He was lowered in a woven wicker basket from a little door in the wall of Damascus...but as so often “the Lord made him to triumph” – all is down to our wonderful ascended Lord.

CHAPTER 12 “The super things” & “the thorn”

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO 1-5

Paul says there is no profit in boasting or glorying. Yet he acknowledges visions & revelations of the Lord Himself.

Archdeacon Farrar suggests Paul spent his 3 months at Corinth both preaching and teaching and probably writing **Galatians** and certainly **Romans** – all in the year **57AD**. He had written 2 Corinthians in Macedonia and sent it ahead of him – in this chapter he looks back at an event 14 years before and that brings us to **the year 43-44AD**. The escape he alluded to in Chapter 11 was just short of 20 years back in 37AD. Gaius Caligula – of whom Agrippa was a confidante was Caesar from 37-41. Agrippa was also on amicable terms with Claudius and went to Caesarea to celebrate Claudius’ return from Britain in 44AD – **the precise date of Paul’s eleemosynary visit to Jerusalem i.e. April 1 AD44**. James, John’s brother, was slain by Agrippa and Peter was put in prison – just prior to that Passover (*Acts 12*). Also Josephus attests that Agrippa who reigned seven years i.e. 39-44AD died in that year. A very noteworthy ancient tradition attested by *Eusebius (History 5.18)* and *Clement of Alexandria (Strom. 6)* states that *the Lord fixed the stay of the apostles at the Holy city to twelve years* and by 44 the crucifixion was more than 11 years in the past. Cornelius had a vision at this time which involved “a man in bright clothing”. Maybe he was given a glimpse of Jesus in Paradise? Cf. *Acts 10.33*. But this is a vision essentially stated but not explained. However like that of Cornelius it fits in aptly to the context of God’s last days of mercy to the Jews in that period when the apostles scattered – and links with Paul’s “mercy” visit – the last of the last kindnesses to a rebellious people.

PAUL CHOOSES TO SAY NOTHING: FIVE SUPER THINGS 6-10

Had Paul wanted to boast he would not show lack of practical wisdom-“I speak openly?” If Paul refrained from boasting no one would reckon anything happening in his life above that is seen or heard from Paul who was short of stature and plain of speech”.

1. Super prophecy

Yet the apostle admits he has had “outstanding revelations” υπερ-βολη.

2. **Super pride** –to prevent that he should live in modern film star mode but to prevent that he might be lifted high υπερ – αιρωμαι there was given him a thorn σκολοψ or *splinter in the flesh...a messenger of Satan to box his ears κολαφιζω*.

3. Super prayer

Peter prayed seriously. Three times he called with the help of the Holy Spirit for relief of what may have been a physical burden – he sought that it might become “apostate” i.e. permanently leave him υπερ τουτο.

4 Super power

God's reply "My grace is adequate reliable strong enough or will satisfy" **αρκει** "My strength is made perfect or complete in your weaknesses. "This promises that *when Paul becomes weaker Gods grace will become more dynamic and rise to the new challenges.* **δυναμις.** So Paul finds it "sweet" to boast in his weaknesses that the power of Christ should cover him **επισκηνοση** like a great tent in which an army might be billeted.

5. Super person – Jesus

"So I am content and I seem OK in circles of weakness, insults, necessities, persecutions, straits – because Jesus is super [*Greek-υπερ*]
When I am weak to soldier, then am I strong".

NOT A SUPER APOSTLE BUT A TRUE SPIRITUAL FATHER 11-19

Paul sets out *five principles of ministry*:

1. Miracles and signs of the Lord's work.
2. Love that keeps in touch and spends itself.
3. Strengthening the church.
4. Acting to prevent quarrelling.
5. Grief over sin – encouraging repentance.

Paul acknowledges he was unwise to boast, but as an apostle he naturally felt he should rightly be honoured with the *very super apostles*. He reckons he does not come behind them while urging "I am nothing". He means that whoever they are they too are nothing without Jesus.

(1) The apostle then speaks frankly "**The signs of the apostle have been accomplished – in a systematic or permanent way i.e. they stand the test.**" In Corinth there were healings – even wonderful events and powerful victories of the Spirit of God in lives and in the community.

(2) **Paul asks why the Corinthians have been so far inferior to the rest of the churches (v.13)** – if it is not that He did not press them – i.e. as an "old and stiff parent" (*Hippolytus uses the term for age related stiffness*) **κατεναρκησα.** "Show me kindness in this wrong!" i.e. I should have been even-handed in requiring support. Yet he remains complacent and pliable. On this third time of asking I will not be "a stiff parent".

Paul is not so zealous to share their material things as for their spiritual development. *It is not appropriate that children save for their parents but parents for their children.* He considers it sweet and pleasurable to spend and waste his substance on their souls- and here comes the great word of 2 Corinthians "**that he might continue loving them OVERFLOWINGLY.**" This time the apostle is the one who is overflowing towards the overflowing church. He then asks pointedly, "will I be less loved?"
"Let that be as it may, I have not burdened you" But while I possess property I am ready to do anything – I have taken you by trickery. Through the one that I sent you did I exploit you? I sent Titus and with him the brother." (As in chapter 8 we are left without a name here-and we are no wiser for guessing) Paul then concludes with the question, "Did we not walk in the same Spirit – i.e. were we *not taught by the Spirit in that way-and walk in the same footprints?* (i.e. of Christ).

(3) Strengthening you is our aim. Paul asks, “Do we seem yet again to be giving an account of our conduct to you? (v.19)” Before God in the circle of Christ we are speaking all these things with the aim of building you up. I fear lest *I will find you not how I want you to be and that I will be found not how you want me to be.*

EIGHT CONDITIONS 20

Eight conditions that Paul presumed possible are now set forth. He also thought he might not relate well at that time – the Greek word **πῶς** is a trade word used when one can do business. He suspected: –

(I) Battles-strife-wrangling;

(II) Glowing hot jealousy;

(III) Strong feeling and passions;

(IV) Contention;

(V) Character assassination;

(VI) Whispering in the ear;

(VII) Tendency to pride and

(VIII) Disorder or anarchy. Strategy would commend waiting till the storm subsided but love must be pro-active. Cf. 1 Corinthians 13.1. Paul’s “third visit” was his final brave attempt to set things in order.

4. LEST COMING AGAIN GOD SHOULD HUMBLE ME 21

I would be sad over many who have sinned earlier and not repented or changed their mind over the depravity or moral wrong done; over the prostitution; over the licentious way they have acted.

CHAPTER 13

“Grace”

THE THIRD VISIT

Paul planted the church on his first visit – 49/50AD. He returned from Ephesus (2Corinthians2.3&5; 7.12) and was so hurt he did not continue in his purpose to return by land to Corinth from Macedonia-instead he went back to Ephesus by sea. Paul, according to Colin Kruse in the Tyndale commentary, “is prepared for a showdown”. I suggest rather that he states a solution.

CONSIDERED STEPS TOWARDS A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

STEP ONE –PASTORAL CARE 2-4

Paul adopted the remarkable procedure outlined by Jesus Mt18.17 – A procedure to establish the right and clarify error. This Corinthian problem involved incest and to avoid continuing claim and counter claim and encourage openness and in order to break the impasse Paul proposed procedure Christ refined for the church from Deuteronomy 19.15 – where the Lord directed the children of Israel . Paul witnesses the procedure he will use. The desired proof of Christ speaking –and what He would say in the context is beyond debate. Deuteronomy 22 13ff with Deut.19.15 and Matthew 5 17-30 give unequivocal support to exercising the social justice of the risen Lord. Christ is not without power to fight for the right among you **ασθενης but can rise to combat each new situation. Paul urges that though He was crucified – he is ruling with power – which He will exercise. This of course was shown in the matter of Ananias and Sapphira in the Jerusalem church. Paul acknowledges insofar as he too must suffer the rude and immoderate opposition of wrongdoers that he is weak – but insofar as He is enabled by the Spirit he is strong in Christ for the purpose of the**

church's discipline. It appears that the early circulation of Matthew may now have become of some importance to Paul and not only this but the statement of the Lord in **Matthew 28.20** would have reinforced the apostle.

STEP TWO – PROPHECY OR SCRIPTURE 5-7

Self scrutiny is the second step. In *1 Corinthians 11.30* this matter was mooted before. Now Paul requires that they test themselves as to the faith. This is in the area of the discipline of the Lord's Table. He applies the words **πειραζω ..δοκιμαζω** The first is our word "*trial*" and suggests that persons be previously examined – the second means "*to assay metals*" or "to test youth as to their readiness for hardship in the army". The apostle then states, "Do you not know yourselves from reading and teaching to realise Christ is among you – his point made much earlier by the statement "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Lord" – unless you fail the test and the **whole "overflow principle" which he has been outlining is at the heart of this epistle and of this genuine faith!**

Paul adds, "I hope that you will recognise that we have not failed the test – Paul had "overflowed in love" still cf. Chapter 12.

STEP THREE – PRAYER 7-10

Paul is not simply praying – he is making a vow before God – not just that the church might not do any wrong – not just so that he might himself appear to be a Christian **filled to overflowing** in the likeness of Christ, but that the church might do the lovely thing even though it is as if we failed the test. Paul prays the church will proceed to its own prior solution in line with his principle though it may not absolve him of blame for not returning etc. Paul then urges that he cannot act against truth but on its behalf. Here the position of Pilate comes to mind.

He now states his joy that when he is in a weak position they are in a strong one – to bring the matter to issue and clear the air. Here he indicates that his whole team join in intercessions that the Corinthians will be able to "mend the ship" and "fit it out" for carrying the gospel **καταρτιζω**.

WHY DID PAUL PRE-EMPT HIS OWN PROPOSED DISCIPLINE?

The reason for writing about procedure at all is that he might not after all need to come to use the bold step of excommunicating **αποτομωσ** – and bringing the method for proceeding to the attention of the church in itself accords well with the way the Lord wishes His authority exercised – in favour of building the church and not to destroy or disrupt it.

4. STEP FOUR – UNITY 11-14

A church cannot merely exist by solving problems. To be united vibrant and outreaching it must have seven other things in place as well.

1. REJOICE **χαιρετε** a church must sing and rejoice – Macedon is an example "rejoice over and over again" even in trial.
2. REPAIR **καταρτιζεσθε** The church like the computer must have "self-repair" in place.
3. COMFORT **παρακαλεισθε** The church must gently nurse its members with the tenderness of the spirit – "sitting by each" and spending time to get needs sorted.

4. COUNSEL **φρονεῖτε** The church must have prudence and “practical ways” of helping and moving itself on.
5. STITCHING UP **εἰρηνεύετε** The church must be good at healing wounds and “sewing” quarrels.
6. EMBRACING **ασπασασθε** The church must be “warm” and ready to embrace old and young rich and poor – every tribe and culture and especially those who err and repent.
7. TAUGHT **αμεν** the church must “believe” in the riches of the grace of Christ and know what that is; must believe in the love of God and have personal experience of it; must believe in the purifying and empowering of the Holy Spirit and affirm that too in experience – in all these **uniting** to develop the doctrine of grace – the qualities of love and the fruits and gifts and holiness of the Spirit within the whole body.

In token of our endeavour so to live we unite to say the Grace to each other on occasions of our meeting – and we do well to remind ourselves of these matters which characterise true and vibrant churches of Christ.

FINIS

**Bob Coffey Aramaic & Greek Bible Companion
L'shuvkha Marya (To the glory of the Lord)**