


ROMANS



**The author on the Appian Way—the
route Peter & Paul took to
the city of Rome**

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

PREFACE

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This commentary in the "mini" series was the first release of New Testament material. It was essentially drafted from work done during the "Cedarmore" years when I enjoyed semi-retirement and began to write with a serious purpose toward a series of commentaries working from the original languages of the bible. This little work reflects Paul's "push for holiness" in the church and that "joyful working Christianity" which once invaded and captivated the world with the love of Jesus and the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. O for a divine refreshing and revival in our souls!

The treatment varies from chapter to chapter in a manner not displeasing-indeed you may find this enhances the overall interest. This work is available on the web in *desktop publishing format*. It was first issued a decade ago on my 67th birthday along with the text my wife gave me on that occasion from Psalms **to which Paul makes 32 references in Romans.**

*"The ordinances of the LORD are sure
In keeping them there is great reward"*

Psalm 19. 9-11

Bob Coffey Westgate May 21 2009

ROMANS 1

JESUS AND THE CALL TO HOLINESS 1-7

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. Over this the Coliseum was soon built and it served as a name for the "colossal" new house of slaughter – a fit testimony to the man who made murder common in Rome. Early Christians, often harshly treated, were buried in catacombs along the Apian Way.

*Paul terms himself a **bond slave of Christ Jesus** (*Ironside 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 – a man whose whole life is "**mortgaged**" [Greek **αφορισμενος**] to the gospel. God "**leaked**" 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" appearing 42 generations after Adam

1. PAUL'S *evangel* EMPHASISES GRACE AND HOLINESS 1-8

That **spirit of holiness** endued Christ who began to pull down Satan's kingdom; *the apostles'* continued this task, in which Roman Christians, called to holiness, played an increasing role. The introduction is rounded off in the blessing of our Melchisadek in v.7. Paul writes, **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the LORD Jesus Christ.** This is a vintage Pauline signature. It is grace that makes Christian ministry and offerings [Greek *λειτουργια προσφερα* "ministry of a hugely generous sort"] acceptable (15.15); grace that enables our labours (1Cor15.10) and grace that reveals Christ in our lives" so Paul as a minister of Christ can walk his talk (Gal 1.15)

2. PAUL'S *Evangel* A LONGING FOR SOULS AND TO VISIT ROME 9-16

Paul's commendation could not be higher – **Your faith is the battle cry in all the world** v8. Paul records praying with thanks for 5 churches (1Cor1.4, Eph1.15, Phil1.3, Col 1.3-4, 1Thess1.2) He lists 39 people in Chapter 16 and **he continued to pray that they should live holy.** 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)

We can imagine him praying, "Please may it be possible to get to Rome". 'Lord' he says in an *if...however* prayer, 'I don't care how You take me.' God's answer is in Acts 25.11&27-28-To Caesar shalt thou go!! As to the "pleasant journey"[Greek *ευδαθησομαι*] v10 there was, in the event, a shipwreck which if anything increased his passion for souls. His longing [Greek *επιποθεω* like a 'dessert' which we loosely call 'afters'] is for something **more** v11, namely that the brave Romans should have the **sweet after the main course.** After the Homeric use Paul introduces himself as **an inconsiderable person** [Greek *τι* meaning 'something not described']; Further describing his intent to be a **steady support** [Greek *στηριχθηναι* 'a prop']; and offering a **scriptural 'conference'** [Greek *συμπααρακαληθηναι* 'an invite to come together for exhortatory or teaching ministry'] – one of several we read of in the N.T. (cf. Acts 14.26, 19.9, 21.17, 28.23). **His plan to visit Rome was hindered until the present.** He thinks of this as divine **pruning** [Greek *καλυθην* 'cutting off long horns or ungainly branches'] that he might be more fruitful at his coming. ("Fruitfulness" is key to Romans c.f. 6.21,7.4,8.23).

3. PAUL'S Evangel BRINGS CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO VIEW 14-17

Paul's Damascus road call meant that everywhere he must announce God's peace. His was a concerted plan to reach the **regions beyond** (*Romans 15 20-21*): Europe (*Ac16.10*); Rome (*1.16*) and Spain (*Rom15.24*). **He is not ashamed to remain permanently under the opprobrium of 'the gospel'** [*Greek επι-αισχυνομαι used for continuing shame in respect of something specific*] **as he discharges his debt.** He holds fiercely the principle of Habakkuk 2.4 **"My" just man** *γγγδχ* (*The Hebrew has a "possessive"*) **shall live my life** *hwhy* (*i.e. a second possessive meaning "share the divine nature"*) **by faith that is in me** *ϋj mma* (*i.e. a third possessive meaning "God given faith"*) *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. Luther put it thus, "Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him enclosed as the ring encloses the precious stone, whoever has this confidence in Christ apprehended in the heart God will accept for righteous"*

4. PAUL'S Evangel WARNS OF WRATH AGAINST WILFUL & DELIBERATE LAWBREAKERS 18-32

In this section we see another attitude than love; it is the attitude that suppresses truth; we see another end than God's glory; it is the end of idolatry; we see another message than the gospel; it is deception; we see fullness than that of the Holy Spirit; it is the fullness of iniquity. That, in summary, is why wrath must fall upon men. Paul ultimately shows the evil man is evangelical and passionate for sin. **Those who are evangelical for evil and profanity** v.18 [*Greek αδικια ... ασεβεια*] **people who vilify and restrain the truth though God made Himself clear to them.** Homer said men can look down and plainly see the panorama of Troy so Paul says **all can see plainly God's exercise of power in the creation that proceeds from Him.**

There is no excuse for unthankfulness, profanity, idolatry, gross indecency, homosexuality or any wilful evil -the catalogue of current sin that Paul describes. **Such men are vague investigators** [*Greek γνοντες*] v.19 who wandered about [*Greek ματαιωω*] v21, **inventing striving** so that **their heart did not bring the outward object into connection with the inward sense.** Their hearts were dark and dizzy [*Greek σκοτος, ασυνετος*]. **Theirs a pretence of wisdom - while they play the fool-bartering the glory of God for man who corrupts, birds subject to all winds beasts that spring about savagely, creeping things that crawl around in secret.** The world's composite deities fall easily into Paul's classification: *Shiva*, the dwarf deity with wings; *Vishnu* that came as fish tortoise & boar; *Anubis* with the jackal's head; the American Indian *Quetzalcoatl* appearing as a green Quetzal bird. The Roman *Partheon Sun God* appeared riding forth as a charioteer with 4 horses.

DOWNGRADE 1 God gave them over to **evil yearning so they were unfit for cleansing v.24** [Greek *ακαθαρσια*]—they then figured the **body was unholy and gradually changed** [Greek *μετα-αλλασσω*] Gods truth to a lie – they fell into fear and creature worship alongside the ever blessed creator.

DOWNGRADE 2 They descended into lesbian and homosexual practice-so God gave them over to pain & stigma [Greek *παθη ατιμιας*]. The word for “men” here used is “fierce” (*savage*” as a dog). A time of enflamed passion had come. They burned out [Greek *εξεκαυθησαν*] in orgies. Men caused other men to “boil over” like a pot [Greek *κατεργαζομαι*] this “men in men” indecency instead of wages earned vagabondage [Greek *αντιμισθιαν*] they wandered as men in a labyrinth.

DOWNGRADE 3 As they did not try Gods way by experience God gave them up to a counterfeit mind (*Literally “a bad coinage of morals”*) as they slighted public assembly, they were filled with wickedness instead of the Holy Spirit; drunk with envy murder debate deceit and malice-instead of addicted to holiness, proud and inventing evil devoid of humility. Without sense, faithfulness to covenant, family feeling, mercy-inspired to do things worthy of death they encourage others This ultimate corruption like that of the days of Noah invites such a judgement as Jesus promised when the men of Sodom would rise up as judges of gross modern sin

ROMANS 2

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” (*Romans1.31*) but corruption is in every stratum of our nature; no-one has a personal defence [Greek *απολογια*] 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 *τοιαντα*] that Paul lists in the first chapter as he quotes from 8 separate O.T. Contexts.

(b) Inescapable Judgment – the Bema awaits 3

You who do these things (or) “sin as a work of art”... ποιω-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 *λογισω*]....you can’t dart out of God’s tribunal. The critic has no bolt-hole

(c) Presumption 4 –5

It is foolhardy to presume on God's grace & patience – using God like a debit card and piling up debt. 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 Sophocles of 'the constancy of the nightingale']; or on God's burning passion & long lasting desire for our salvation" Truly God's 'good nature' [Greek *χρηστον*] conducts us to a repentant way of life. The human heart is parched and does not change. *καρδια* shares a root with *κραδια* "a quivering fig branch" which falls in the wind. Though potentially the world's most fruitful thing **the 10 month cropping fig** came under the curse of Christ as will the unrepentant heart. **We treasure up wrath** Sophocles refers to animal corpses as "the (*strange*) sweet treasures of vultures"; the treasure of the ungodly is no less strange.

Paul predicts an *οργη* of divine wrath. 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.

GOD LOOKS ON THE HEART 6-11.

The reason God looks on the heart is to discover the "inspiration" or motive of human actions.

WORKS 6-8

Ancient pagans thought the offering of 100 oxen in a lifetime to God fulfilled righteousness. For the Jew 70 lambs and other offerings were requisite. But if we look into the OT references in Psalm 62 and Proverbs 24 the Lord is concerned about faith prayer, sharing, wealth and about delivering our brother man from spiritual ruin. Ours it is to "seek patient continuance in maintaining these noblest and best works" to this attaches the triple crown of **glory honour and immortality**. Jesus highlighted the true work God would discover in man cf. John 6.29 **HIC EST LABOR DEI – CREDERE** (*The Latin renders the expression 'This is the work of God – that you should believe' emphatic*) All scripture commends **the seeker** – study the following 42 texts and compare with Psalm 27 & Exodus 33.19, Dt. 4.29; 1 Chron. 28.9; 2 Chron. 15.2, 19.3, 30.18, 31.21, 34.3, Ezra 7.10, 8.21, 8.22, Job 5.8, Ps. 9.10, 14.2, 24.6, 27.8, 34.14, 53.2, 63.1, 69.32, 105.4, 119.2 & 10, Prov 8.17, Song 3.2, 6.1, Isa. 8.19, Isa. 26.9, Isa. 45.19 & 22, Jer. 29.13, Dan. 9.3, Amos 5.4 & 8, Zeph. 2.3, Mal. 2.7.. Mt. 6.33, 7.7, 28.5 Mk. 1.37, 3.32, Rom. 3.11, Col. 3.1.

WORKS 9-11

To those who are in strife εριθειας who fail to trust in truth but rather confide in unrighteousness – to every soul that accomplishes or refines evil [Greek *κατεργαζομενου κακον* 'works to fine it down' works hard at it'] **flaming indignation, swelling wrath, pressure that wastes and narrowness** – i.e. no hiding place This wrath as in Revelation 16 is reserved for all who disobey as **GLORY HONOUR AND PEACE** is for those who refine and accomplish God's work. The heavenly glory spares saints the earthly plagues, bestows the honour to be with the

bridegroom not the wrath of hell and affords millennial peace not tribulation and eternal joy instead the crisis of judgment.

How relevant Hezekiah's prayer, "The Good Lord pardon every one that prepares his heart to seek God the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary" (2Chronicles30.18) Mighty and terrible; He regards not persons nor takes reward. None moves him from His principle of jurisprudence (Deuteronomy 10.17).

GENTILES ARE NO DIFFERENT 12-16

Who continues to sin without law perishes just like those within its circle. The "lost" are separated [*Greek απο-λωω* 'loosed from'] from Christ whether connected to the law or not. Receiving law lectures does not justify. Paul's word "doers" [*Greek ποιηται*] v13 is feminine and speaks of "inspired deeds" and "inspired poets". God created deeds and inspired us to do them – this is what Paul argues in Ephesians 2.10. James in his epistle 1.22 makes exactly this point strongly – contrasting "pupils of the law" with "saints inspired with God's works of faith". So **when gentiles "do under inspiration" by divinely implanted nature godly deeds they demonstrate (a) law divinely written on their hearts (b) the witness of conscience and (c) instructions from one another's thoughts** – which will be relevant in the day of judgment to raise conviction-but the gospel will be the only way to establish peace in that judgment – and the "secrets" of Gentile hearts will be opened up by Jesus in that day.

FORMAL JUDAISM GOD DELIGHTS IN FAITH & PRAISE 17-20a

You, who are a Jew, look at yourself [*Hebrew* *ידע* -'just look']. Like Homer playing fun with the word "ceramic" the new Greek word for "mud" Paul holds the epithet "Praise" *hduh* up before the Jew.

2. **You wish to refresh yourself by resting on the law** he says to fellow Jews. It is as if they were very tired and needed to rest or revive through overnighing [*Greek επιαναπαυω* "to rest overnight"] on the law.

3. **You boast** [*Greek* *καυχασαι* *stick out your neck*] **in the law.**

4. **You investigate** [*Greek* *γνωσκω* -*looking to separate truth from falsehood*].

5. **You test** [*Greek* *δοκιμαζω* *as metal assayers*] **the things that excel in importance**

6. **You are catechised** [*Greek* *κατηχουμενος* *parrot style*].

7. **Thinking to lead the blind** [*Greek* *οδηγος* -*of a 'guide' to find the way (to God)*].

8. **Like a light** [*Greek* *φως*] **illuminating men in the darkness** – for Jews lived in a world of ghosts, a world of their fathers sepulchers, seldom breathing resurrection air.

9. **Teaching a 'system' or discipline** [*Greek* *παιδευτη* – *used of music or archery or horse-riding*].

10 **A teacher of skills to blind babes.**

THE LOGIC OF FAITH 20b-24

Yours is a mould of knowledge of God and truth in the law – it is a sort of outline – even beautiful – but just a mould of skilful words re-acquaintance with Gods person and revealed matters – the personal knowledge missing – Christ hidden. The word **form**

is a metathesis – *φορμη* for *μορφη* denied by Pott’s etymology but generally respected. Judaism has a “form of godliness” without the power. The mould of religion cannot breathe life into a man

Paul then cites commands 8, 7 and 3 which the Jews frequently broke. In v.22 he refers to “**robbing temples**” which **FF Bruce** 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. Well might Paul refer to Psalm 50 in these verses – the “covenant of sacrifice” the Passover” and its antitype, “the Cross”, was betrayed. In the absence of this approach sacrifice “**what profit is in circumcision?**” asks the apostle

CIRCUMCISION AND LAW KEEPING ARE NOT ENOUGH 26-

28Circumcision is valueless without abiding by the law. If one physically filthy [Greek ακροβυσια-from a root meaning bunged up' with filth in this case] guards as precious the acquittal and the sentences of justification that belong to the law is he not counted or reckoned among the circumcised? So Paul states plainly that the uncircumcised judge the Jews to have digressed from the plan [Greek παραβατην as actors might digress from the script of a Roman play] v27

THE OUTWARD AND INWARD CONTRASTED 29

A “**Jew**” is not a Jew by virtue of “**appearance**” neither i.e. by 'exhibition' nor indeed by 'circumcision' and here Paul finishes well by quoting Deuteronomy 30.6 God who judges the 'secret things' can find His nature hidden in a Gentile and delights equally to find the “hidden praising Jew” who loves the Lord. This is what Paul calls “heart circumcision” and well accords with Jeremiah 31 – the purest logic of the covenant relationship – the faith that works by love

ROMANS 3

A documentation of the problem of man as seen from the perspective of the advantaged Jew-and scripture-with 11references to Psalms and one striking corroboration from Isaiah 59.7-8 (vv.15-17)

WILL IT END ON THE SOUR NOTE?

Israel's bondage in Egypt was bitter. The rape of Sierra Leone when slavers ferried their human cargo packed like sardines between Africa and America – was cruel. Spiritual slavery lives on today as bondage to sin. Will God not mark the third millennium AD with judgement? Of course – and with mercy – and that ere long!

HISTORY IS BITTER REBELLION, CALVARY IS SWEET PEACE

The preacher **W.E.Sangster** called our weakness “Inertia of nature” due to unsubdued sin. We desperately need the emancipating power of Romans 3.24 that we might be 'Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Paul meant by 'redemption' *απολυτρωσις* – leaving past sin. The present age in Europe spawns laws like mushrooms but sin untamed defies them all. There is not a heartbeat

[Greek διαστολή-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**

STORIES STRESSING HOW SIN RUINS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND QUALITY OF LIFE

(1) **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" reminiscent of God's challenge to Cain "Sin lies [*as a dog*] at the door" Why give it houseroom? It can pre-occupy you and take you off on the wrong track. You must be its master!

(2) An Arab sat in his comfortable tent. His camel nosed in the flap as if asking for headroom. The Arab 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".

SPOONFULS OF SUGAR FOR YOUR SOUL

The experience of David in Psalms and the doctrine of Paul in Romans 3

TESTIMONY TO PERVASIVE SIN

TESTIMONY TO COVENANT MERCY

Ps 5	The heart is an open grave	Direct your prayer in the morning	3.13
Ps 10	Hard threatening cursing	Journey to God who "hears in silence"	3.14
Ps 14	God looks down on vile Sodom	Look for the return of all returns	3.20
Ps36	Flattery – no hatred of sin	Love like the rainbow is precious	3.18
Ps 51	Born in sin-an adulterer	Hyssop cleanses and the Holy Ghost fills	3.4
Ps53	God looks down at a wolf at the fold	God judges cf. Nebuchadnezzar	3.10-12
Ps 103	Moses saw the secret-sin removed by offering	Selah-sin is lifted	3..2
Ps 116	All liars-even Samuel fails	I love You Lord Your saints are precious	3.4
Ps 140	Poison is in the human tongue	Lord hear my call for "grace"	3.13
Ps 143	None righteous before God	Don't wander the desert-live in Canaan-	3.20

"JESUS" SWEETEST NAME ON EARTH IS ON THE THRONE OF MERCY

(EX 25.17 with HEBREWS 4.16, DEUT 47-8, ECC 7.20 with 9.15, ISA 59.7-8)

The Salvation Army 'mercy seat' is a 'penitent rail'. The Jewish equivalent was a blood-sprinkled cover hiding the law and its judgment. Law reveals sin; God's Son dying for us reveals a new permanent condition of acceptance through him. He grants righteousness to such as believe. He died to atone and justification from all sin is the gift of God to all such as approach the throne of mercy where Christ is now seated in repentance and faith. Moses rejoiced in 'God so near' – and He is near in mercy still. Solomon spoke of a poor but wise man who saved a city but was soon forgotten. Don't forget Christ – He can rescue your City of Mansoul from the world the flesh and the devil. Isaiah says, "Sin hides God's face" – but His hand is strong – He can save you! He can hold you! He can take away the bitterness! He will bring sweetness and light!

ROMANS 4

The font of preaching is Genesis 15. Here is the first "Thus saith the Lord". In Romans 4 Paul shows the need for proclamation of forgiveness-Psalm 32 1-2, of Union with Christ –Isa. 48.13 by faith & of assurance by atonement Isaiah 53.4-5

ABRAHAM'S DISCOVERY

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**. God's 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. It was a special time-the same time as the Passover was slain-Exodus 12.6 "At twilight". The reason is very great and we shall see that as we move into this theme of *Union with Christ*. Let us initially grasp what God did when he sought to promote faith in the heart of Abraham. He brought him out at twilight when the sun had sunk and the last rays still shone the evening star first stood alone and then was joined by a host of stars. Something of this is captured in our song "All on an April evening when April dews were abroad I thought on the Lamb of God". When all that fills life's day is gone what have I left? Will you stand like Abraham in devotion with Christ as the stars join the evening star this evening?

2. OUR SECOND VISIT TO GENESIS 15 SHOULD LIFT A BURDEN

Righteousness ...was imputed Romans 4.9

PSALM 32 (cf. vv7-8) and SALLY

This is David's poem to teach us the wonderful experience of having our sin covered. There are 3 great questions. What have you done about your sin? Are you living with guilt? And have you a real experience of divine pardon? *Let me tell you about Sally.* Her marriage was happy. Sorrow came from outside. The best dad in the world took a heart attack. He recovered and then came the news she learned in the hospital corridor-it was all over. The family might have helped but depression set in. Her husband suggested champagne – a little socialising. A second affection grew in her life – she found it hard to avoid the advances of a colleague of her husbands. His words "I love you" seemed to meet an old need. Blackouts convulsions paralysis of the legs followed. The psychiatrist said it was emotional. She finally ended in a special unit where a Christian reminded her of Christ's desire to make of us a new creature. Sally turned over her sin and guilt to Christ and began a brand new life – that's Psalm 32.

3. OUR THIRD VISIT TO GENESIS 15 SHOULD ENDOW US WITH ASSURANCE NOR EGYPT NOR CHALDEA COWED THIS GIANT OF FAITH-WHO INHERITED THE PROMISE

Soshall your seed be Romans 4.18

Paul takes us a 3rd time to Gen 15 & 17 to show us faith's happiness (vv9 & 11) & then the promise of Genesis 22.17. Three hard things were done by Abraham. In his own words to his servants he said, "I & the lad will go, we will worship together, we will return". The Hebrew verb in each case means "We will cause ourselves etc" - because it was so difficult to contemplate and to execute the sacrifice of a beloved son. But harder than both was to have the faith that even if Isaac died God would there and then raise him again. Abraham's faith was strong. This sort of faith hangs for very life and salvation only upon God. This faith believes in life after death.

4. OUR FOURTH VISIT TO GENESIS 15 STIRS US WITH HOPE OF UNION WITH CHRIST....IN THE ALPHA & OMEGA

It was reckoned to him for righteousness Romans 4.22

Paul brings us then to Isaiah 48.12-13 in v 17. That great chapter supplies the clearest OT reference to the trinity – 48.16 and challenges Israel not to try to deceive her maker as Jacob did in coming near to his aged and blind father Isaac. God does not want an "in name only" faith. He wants reality. He who caused the stars to stand in unity-as one army (*Heb ECHAD*) wants us to be united to Christ even as the Spirit is united to the Father and the Son. Paul takes us back a FOURTH time to Genesis 15.5 in v18 to show us Abraham the great man of hope. The patriarch was shown the mystery of the church – Christ's bride. This hope together with that in the great Trinity statement (*Isa48.16*) and of the Alpha and Omega of Revelation 1.11 and 22.16 is our family hope of the bridegroom's return. Are you ready?

HOW CAN GOD AND MAN BE UNITED?

Paul takes us as he concludes the argument of the chapter to Genesis 17.17 – God is

going to create in Isaac a covenant line. Abraham may laugh but he has to agree. **“Righteousness that is by faith”** is God’s resolute plan. God is going to deal in covenant with believers – by **imputing righteousness** (*Gen.15.6*) at the cost of the cross and the death of Christ – prefigured in the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22. So Paul leads us to Isaiah 53 & the substitutionary Lamb of God. This is God’s answer to man’s sin.

ROMANS 5

The Bridge of Hope – Mankind like the couple on the willow pattern plate is pursued by the guilt Power & results of Sin. They run to the bridge by the garden. We have a "landing platform" of access to God – now by prayer& steamily in heaven – and the deposit of the Holy Spirit – and the reconciling man who brings greater blessings than we lost in Adam.

There are three references to the Old Testament: (1)The “hope” of the bible in Psalm 22 pinioned upon Christ who yielded his life to death & in Psalm 25 where the believer looks to the Lord alone for forgiveness and defence;(2)The “one man” story of Genesis (2.17, 3.19, 3.6) “eating and dying”; “the curse”; “sin and trespass”.

(3) “The obedient One-namely Christ” cf. Isaiah 53.11 – described as “my servant” who “shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied and by knowledge of Him many will be justified.” This chapter majors on the joyful effects of Christ’s ministry and the glory that is Christ’s alone.

THE LINE OF ARGUMENT

- i Teachers fail in deeds
- ii Some gentiles obey conscience
- iii Israel has law but lacks faith.
- iv All men sin
- v None can boast
- vi Salvation is without works
- vii The ten commandments are in force
- viii Faith alone saves...when the light of the Gospel is revealed
- viii We boast through Christ of a “here-and-now” relationship of grace and of Glory hereafter
- ix By the Spirit's help through trouble – we unashamedly make our boast of “grace sufficient”
- x We boast in our reconciling Lord and herald God's gift of righteousness far as the curse has spread.

JOY OF LAND AHOY! v.3

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*.

No.1 WE BOAST A SIGNAL FAVOUR-THE KINGS SCEPTRE v3

Another application of the Greek term *προσαγωγή* is “receiving favour to 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

No 3. WE BOAST IN GOD v.11

Adam is contrasted with Christ here. Adam indeed gives impression of Christ. Adam is first 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 Xenophon & 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.. It is as if the *Spiritual Bureau d' exchange* makes it's profits over to the buyer!

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHALOM

“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”

Those who receive the extravagant gift of grace (v11) live spiritually as royals – children of The King Just as fully as death reigned in us, life now reigns (vv12-17) Just as truly as disobedience overwhelmed mankind, the obedience of Christ overwhelms us. Just as the law shows sin's tide of ruin so the cross demonstrates grace overflowing in life eternal.

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

He painted *Niagara* – a scene which hung in the little mission hall where he was converted – it spoke of Gods extravagant grace – and 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

THE ODESSEY OF ROMANS-EXTENDED COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 5

If you can suffer a literary slant on this mighty epistle let me point out in allegorical terms just where the *logic* of Paul has thus far lead us in this epic spiritual progress and journey of the soul.

We arrive in this chapter through several conclusive arguments where true believers live at peace and happy fellowship with daily access to their LORD and Master.

“Faith town” 3.28 'We reckon therefore that man is justified by faith without works of law' a cluster of three further conclusions bring us to the town of “Peace/Shalom” 'Having been now justified by faith we have peace with God' in 5.1; we already see “Rapture town” some distance away, for 'we shall be saved from wrath through Him' in 5.9 and “The town of One Glorious Man” 'through whom many will be made righteous' in 5.19 and so we go onwards to the true outpouring of the latter day when 'Satan is trampled under the feet of believers' in the great latter days of the City of God in 16.19.

THE BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION

(1) **PROPHETIC BLESSING** There are three references to the Old Testament:

(A) **The “hope”** of the bible in Psalm 22 pinioned upon Christ who yielded his life to death & in Psalm 25 where the believer looks to the Lord alone for forgiveness and defence;

(B) **The “one man” story** of Genesis (2.17, 3.19, 3.6) “eating and dying”; “the curse”; “sin and trespass”;

(C) **“The Obedient One** – namely Christ” cf. Isaiah 53.11 – described as “my servant” Who “shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied and by knowledge of Him many will be justified”.

This chapter majors on the joyful effects of Christ’s ministry and the glory that is Christ’s alone.

(2) **PEACE WITH GOD** A great covenant love relationship Let us have peace/we have peace with God." **Being justified** *δικαιωθεντες* means “having accepted the terms”. Many urge this idiom is from a court of law – it is rather a rare sort of battlefield idiom where the *assailant* looks at one he *has made or counted an enemy* and finds He "is for us" and offering express terms of peace. “My promise that you will be blessed” “My blood shed for your forgiveness” and “My friendship if you are willing to change and trust me" This alone can turn enmity into lasting friendship. *NB* “A pardon is only a pardon when it is accepted” – American *Justice Marshall's* comment on "a written waiver."

(3) **PRAYER προσευχη** As we stand in common action as priests & soldiers we will need to invoke this granted access day by day. We will on occasion have our assurance helmet tossed off, drop our sword, our girding of truth will slip so we will need to keep everything bound together by prayer. When good queen Esther approached Ahasuerus in Esther 5.2 “he held out his golden scepter” because he loved her. Christ holds out his arms however often we come. “Ask and ye shall receive” “Ye have asked nothing” “Whatever ye shall ask believe” *‘I always like to touch on prayer’*

avers the American preacher **Dutch Sheets**. My wife Mina prayed for 5 new people for Ladies meeting -They came!

“Pray always. Ephesians 3.20 “He is able to do more than we ask [*Greek υπερπερισσος – far beyond*] “in the measure of the power that is at work within us” (**Wuest**). **Strong** recognises the “distributive” participle meaning "excessive" so James writes 'The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective' (James5.16)

(4) PERSEVERANCE “And we boast in hope of the glory of God” “We confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. “Where I am there will my servant be” “I will that those You gave me be with me” “By His grace I shall look on His face” *I'll miss Queens letter I'm going to see the king” said Bill Jaegar at 99 a trophy of grace I had the joy to lead to Jesus at the ripe old age of 94.*

(5) PURITY AND HOLINESS

Holiness is possible even in a world like this. We boast “amid tribulations” or “while under burdens” we sing” *purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver*”-we do well.

1 Cor. 3.13 & 1 Jn1.7. PATIENCE ...EXPERIENCE ...HOPE

This Hope is not an unworthy one. Love is poured in – lavished on us with a passion for our holiness-by our Holy Guest. At the very moment we were weak [*Greek ασθενων lacking strength- sick*] Christ died (*or*) “His death is distributively real for each of us in the moment of our ungodliness. With toil and pain a man would die for a righteous one – Stephen died as a martyr for Christ. In place of a profoundly good man even if in a moment of haste *ταχα* a certain (*Peter*) would be bold. God commended His love to us – He engaged with us – He united with us in a bond of love – we are His own

(6) THE RAPTURE OF IT 9-11

Much more “therefore” being justified “in the circle of His blood we will be saved **through Him** from “wrath” *οργη* for while at personal enmity we were reconciled by the death of Gods Son – now as reconciled believers we shall be **SAVED through Him** from wrath – Rev 6.17 & 7.14 combines these concepts. Not this alone but “we are boasting of ourselves that we are voluntary servants now reconciled to the Lord.

(7) ONE GLORIOUS MAN 12-21

Adam –in him we lost the blessing gained the curse. **Christ** – in Jesus we have more blessings than we lost in Adam

- a. v13 **For** until the law sin was in the world unreckoned – but primitively evident by death’s reign.
- b. v15 Like Adam Christ – but different in that His gift flowed –the act of giving was death-atoning not cursing.
- c. v16 By the transgression of one death reigned so *the recipients* of grace through the overflowing gift *reign* in life by one.
- d. v18 as the condemnation was over all nations so the plea for amendment of wrong is for all nations.

e. v19 As the many were constituted sinners and a race in disobedience so a new nation arose by obedience of one.

The purpose is to overturn sin's reign unto death that grace may reign to eternal life through our Lord Jesus.

ROMANS 6

FIVE ELEMENTS OF HOLINESS

In Christ all elements are present. Whereas in Christ holiness is realised & patented – in the disciple it is applied for and experiential. Of Christ *qua deus est* we can say " God is holy". His ministry of obedience & suffering sampled the highest and holiest living.

NO.1 THE VITAL ELEMENT OF BAPTISM 1-3

We may strongly argue for one or other mode of baptism – but *εν χριστω* baptism basically involves "life change" a dying and burial leading to regeneration. 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. When iron was tempered its every atom had a new configuration. So new usefulness immediately followed. There is a question to be asked here, says Paul, a thoroughness to be understood – “Am I ready & willing to submit to all to the Father’s plans for me?” It is about mortification. 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.

NO.2 THE ESSENTIAL CONCLUSION 4-11

There is to be the very form and shape and freshness about the disciple that was seen in the life of the risen Lord. Paul speaks here of natural growth [*Greek φυσις*] and of sprouting [*Greek καινοτητα* – *blossoming' 'flourishing' 'fresh colours' typical of spring flowers*]. Five times in vv 4-11 he says it is "spring time life" using one or other of these Greek words *ζωης συζησομεν ζη ζη ζωντας* . Our eternal life is life at its best, spring-like life. He speaks of Christ as dying the death of "one **for** many" [*Greek εφραπαζ 'once for all*] cf. *επι πηνυμι* – An intensive of the motion of nailing. The sight of soldiers cracking in those nails is stressed both here and in Hebrews to contrast with the power of His New Life and draw us to have done with lesser things. In Greek mathematics "One" in this form is used of "one over" e.g. 1/3 He died "one **over**" myriads. We must calculate on being like the "risen Lord" so that we can "teach by our walk"(v4) what has taken place. There is a "Second Adam" – a new cultivation of beauty of character & power of life on offer. The old man is

"fenced off" FF Bruce (*by the palisade of the cross.*). So what has happened is intended to bring in a **new creation**.

God harden me against myself – this coward with pathetic voice-who craves for ease & rest & joys.

Myself arch traitor to myself – my hollowest friend my deadliest foe-my clog whatever road I go.

NO.3 THE ELEMENT OF VICTORY 12-14

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 have a king – and as the defenders of a city once replied by arrows to those who called for surrender we henceforth act as soldiers. We are not mercenaries – we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. The "weapons" of our warfare are not carnal – but Gods sword & shield etc. (*Eph6*).

The crux here is "desire"[*Greek επιθυμια*] i.e. *a rushing to objects of desire.*

"When the first desire after God arises in thy soul give all thy heart to it – it is Gods magnet to draw you from the claims of material things to heaven" (*William Law*). Cf. Augustine in his address to former paramours he was used to say, 'It is not I'. We are fired with a new ambition and gladly "yield our members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6.13).

NO.4 THE ELEMENT OF SERVANTHOOD 15-20

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 an equal commitment of the servant in Exodus 21.6 forever bound to his master's door by the piercing awl. Paul refers to the "original model" [*Greek τυπος namely "that which is hammered out"*] of Jesus' doctrine here – the four **οτι** references to genuine truth taught earlier are to John 14. 19 "**If I live you live**" (we live in him v8), Matt. 16.21 (Christ dies no more v.9) "**Son must die and rise again**"; Jn. 1.14-16. "**by Christ came grace & truth**" (but under grace v15); Jn.8.34 **Sinners serve sin** (you were servants of sin v.17) *This significant reference tends to show that by AD58-9 when writing from Corinth Paul already knew truth that Matthew and John were teaching – or written sources related to their teaching!*

NO.5 THE ELEMENT OF FRUITFULNESS 21-23

Israel will be ashamed of her ways with Sodom's & Samaria's children (*Ez. 16.61*). Roman believers now do not to seek **fish & salt** i.e. "wages" as 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**).

ROMANS 7

Paul explores his heart under God's law – and finds the law of self raging in his soul Yearnings, beguilings, carnality and foul imaginings – tortured by self he knows victory only through the cross.

THE LAW OF THE HUSBAND – A LESSON ON THE POWER OF THE CROSS 1-11

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. He 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”. This is Paul's summary of how it felt to be bound to sin (v.8).

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD INSTRUCT THE CONSCIENCE 12-20

Paul sets out his second powerful argument in this way. Had I not had commandment No.10. I had not recognised my sin [*Greek επιθυμησης a wantonness lust and passion*] – the unmanageable "inner" Paul. His *O.T* references are to the 10th command (*Exodus20*), the unattainable statutes (Lev 18), the beguiling serpent (Gen.3) the carnality seen in David (*Psa.51*), and the "evil imagination" (*Gen. 6 & 8*). Such is man – totally corrupt and universally sinful. Without the 10 laws the state of man's life would remain unrecognised and unremedied. With them " the sin I commit becomes exceedingly personal barbaric or hard"[*Greek αμαρταλος*] 7.13.

THE LAW OF SELF: IS LIKE ETRUSCAN TORTURE. 21-23

The law of desire makes man into a look alike of the proverbial donkey dying between two carrots. The law of God gives inner pleasure. 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".

PERSONALISE

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".

Let us never forget "the body of Christ broken for us" – the union unbreakable – the full atonement!

Let us rejoice in the "newness of the Spirit" – new within Paul's lifetime – the gift, the power, the weapons and the fruit of the Spirit.

Let us not forget the platform of prayer where we can "dwell in heaven" and gain strength for time of need.

MERCHANT OF VENICE

Illustration of the Cross – 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'*".

ROMANS 8

Life in the Spirit (& parallel references to the wretched life of sin). Life in Christ wins over condemnation defeat and separation. This is the premier chapter in Paul-here is victory. Ten factors that might separate from the love of the Lord are discounted

THE JUBILEE OF THE SOUL

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 αποκαραδοκια 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"

PEOPLE WITH A HOPE AND HEIRSHIP IN CHRIST

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 εντυγχανω – 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".

PEOPLE WHO RESPOND VICTORIOUSLY & HEROICALLY v.37

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, Hardheart 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? Paul in v 32 glimpses Moriah and sees that God did not look with all His eyes contemplate & say "I cannot give my beloved Son". He recalls Joshua & Caleb (*Numb 13 .30*) in Romans 8.31 – well aware there are no unfighable giants.

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 21 years; shipwrecks, savages, spears & the club that knocked me to earth – I will still be your missionary, Lord!" I often keep this spirit alive in me and sing the old hymn – "O victory in Jesus my Saviour for ever"! The *Faith Mission* called their hymnbook "Songs of Victory" and as I knew them the Mission Pilgrims were active radiant ambassadors of the victorious Christ My mother was converted under their ministry and so was our son Mark. Sing, O Christian friend and praise God for victory!

ROMANS 9

The truth is in Christ. The glory of Christ is maintained among His people. Whereas "The Israelites" are brought out, Pharaoh overwhelmed. "Isaac" is chosen. Esau is hated "Jacob" is loved and "Moses" is called. These four and all who will walk with God share a promptitude of faith.

WHAT IS THE WORST PAIN?

It is surely the sort Christ suffered. "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" cries Jeremiah. He saw Israel dismembered and the extremities of siege breed cannibalism. Our Lord is pictured in Isaiah 53.4 & 11 as bearing the combined grief of us all. Moses in Exodus 32.32 felt like Paul willing to die vicariously if Israel would be benefited. Mormons baptise on behalf of deceased non-Mormon relatives. Such acts are neither vicarious nor valuable – these characteristics belong to Christ's atoning blood. But such acts witness man's general unpreparedness for eternity. Our

Lord told a story of a man with five brothers who sought to evangelise from hell. The pain of eternal destiny in the most summary words of the universe “Depart from me” is the sharpest of all.

RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGE NOT THE ANSWER

God adopted Israel and gave them The Shekinah, the covenants, the lawgiving the priesthood, the promises, the fathers – and Christ in the flesh. Take Isaac – son of Abraham, who from earliest days demonstrated Gods grace – he became the child of promise. Take Jacob, the smaller baby – Esau the elder brother became his servant. At the end of the Old Testament Malachi the last prophet said, "Jacob I loved; Esau was my personal enemy."

THE CASE OF PHARAOH 14-18

What bold statement could be madder than “Is God unjust?” – “Never”. God has a purpose in showing mercy and tender compassion. The great text of Exodus 9.16 pictures Moses (*in Gods words*) addressing Pharaoh Rameses and telling him bluntly that He(*God Almighty*) will show His superior exertions over the man calling himself god. Four times God "hardens" Pharaoh's heart. (*Exodus 4.21, 7.3, 9. 12, 14, 4&7*) – by warning, by miracle, by magicians withdrawing and by the death of his Son.

THE POTTERS PARABLE 14-23

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 φυραμα – used of the 'swelling' of pride*] and from it makes vessels which honour him & which dishonour him as men are humbled or hardened. While determined 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.

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA AND ISAIAH 24-33 & v16

The long hike of history

Hosea pledges that the God who brought back Gomer can restore His people to faith. Isaiah cries aloud that God will bring a remnant back in the

last days. (*Isa. 1.9, 40.1-11*) The other statement in v 16 refers to the long church era of grace. "It is not the *strong will* or *great effort* of him that runs, but *divine mercy* alone that saves – so Gentiles by faith have to date outstripped the Jews who like hurdlers have stumbled over Christ. v.32 (*cf. Isaiah 8.14, 28.16*).

ROMANS 10

Warmth is welcome. Nothing beats a blazing fire and a warm bowl of soup on a winter day. A warm heart to cheer when life hurts is a treat in itself. Zeal is good but let it be according to truth not fanaticism; sincere and without hypocrisy, full of sweet faith.

No.1 ZEAL AND PRAYING

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'(*Godet*) O that they had or yet would soon line up under the rule of Christ. Their religious zeal lacked accurate knowledge. This proposition is well demonstrated in Paul's course of life. A favourable example of true zeal lies in the prayer of **George Wishart** who as he died prayed thrice '*O Saviour of the world have mercy on me. Father in heaven into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*'(*Kissing the executioner he added, 'Dear harte'*) So he died by the dike side in Mauchline a tall bearded figure of a man in a French hat, black doublet and hose.

No.2 ZEAL AND FOLLOWING

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*" With all of these and our heart deeply moved how we should believe!

No.3 ZEAL AND SPEAKING

v.9 **'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'** *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.

No.4 ZEAL AND POSSESSING

The same Lord is rich toward all who believe. There is no difference.¹² The Greek word for 'difference' is *διαστολη* [*used of 'the opening of the heart valve'*] God can open the heart of a Lydia or a **Pat Boone**, draw a Mohawk to Himself or teach *issumagijoujungnainermik (forgiveness)* to an Eskimo. All have sinned and God will save people from every tribe and tongue – such is His zeal for our redemption.

Paul quotes three fundamental OT passages on "faith": –

(1)The stone-laying chapter Isaiah 28.16 'Behold me laying a foundation stone in Zion' this is God's call to pay serious attention to the death of Christ on Calvary and his subsequent resurrection. Quoted in Rom9.33, 10.11, 1Cor3.11 Eph2.20 & 1Pet2.4, 2.6

(2)The Pentecostal chapter Joel 2.32 "Their voice has gone out to all the earth...to the end of the world"-speaking of the outpouring of Pentecost in universal speech & of latter days

(3)The Missionary Chapter Isaiah 52 "How beautiful are the feet of them who bring the good news" These servants are to be pure as they speak of Him who "startles" the nations. In the Great War Britain sent out a message, "send us ships". Australia replied, "We have grain"*(but the mice ate it because there were no ships to carry it)* Christ needs carriers. This missionary zeal must not abate in its obedience to His "go ye!"

No.5 ZEAL AND REJECTING

in v.20 Paul quotes Isaiah 65.1, "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 the "refusal" of Israel to claim her king is arraigned by Paul as by Moses & Isaiah. **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.*

ROMANS 11

Notwithstanding the twists & turns of history-slavery in Egypt, Babylonian captivity, the plot of Haman, pogroms and the holocaust Israel lives on. Paul's image for this provenance of Abraham's seed is a "remnant". When a cloth roll is largely used the remaining pieces are remnants – surprising what a creative mind can do with a remnant! My mother valued the remnant & made herself a becoming dress from single remnant...

THE BELIEVING REMNANT 1-10

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. Paul's twofold assurance is found in the running "therefore's" of v.1 & v5 namely *God's outstretched hand by the prophet's prophets & His grace in calling out a New Testament people* by the redeemer. **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, a man may stumble but not irrevocably fall v.11

THE RECONCILED SAINTS 11-25

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 crisis" – 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.

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.

THE REVIVED COVENANT PEOPLE 26-36

The fullness of the Gentiles comes in – and for the moment seems to wipe out Israel. Paul here uses his **1st testimony** from Isaiah to Christ as Rescuer – one who comes with the power of a mighty wave (*Isa59*). He predicts with Isaiah (27.9) in a **2nd testimony** “the East wind” of suffering –Jacob’s trouble –when God chastens Israel and yet is her daily keeper. Jeremiah’s stunning testimony (31.34) is cited-“from the least to the greatest saving knowledge is to be given”. **Isaiah's 3rd testimony** (45.15&17) is that *God will hide but appear for "Israel's everlasting salvation"*. Now (*Isaiah55.11-13*) the **4th testimony of Isaiah** 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. Isaiah's 5th testimony* 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.”

ROMANS 12

Ch.5 majors on –justification the insight Luther recovered; Ch6 could be a treatise on holiness – the emphasis of puritan & revivalist; Ch12 is about service – about my life and yours on the altar for God-our hearts aflame – the lives aglow. Believers, responsive to mercy, minister by grace in the body and witness in love to the world at large.

“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. Three things matter to God about how you and I live: first, that we respond to His mercy; second that we respond to grace, third that we respond to His Love with compassion. The parable of the prodigal son shows the wonder of the first; the parable of the wise steward the wonder of the second; the parable of the Good Samaritan that of the third.

1. NEW LIFE IN CHRIST 1-2

TRANSFORMATION NOT CONFORMITY A LIFE ABLAZE!

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.

2. NEW USE OF TALENTS & GIFTS!

IMPROVING OUR SERVE: HOW TO KEEP ABLAZE! 3-8

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.

3. NEW ATTITUDES! TRIPLE STRENGTH LOVE 9ff

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 Psa. 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 blesses 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. **Let’s be fervent in spirit serving the Lord!**

Illustrations of fervour:

1. Rev 3.15 "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot"..."I would that thou wert hot or cold – the zeal of God
2. Poem "Christ has no hands but our hands" **A J Flint's** service
- 3 Methodist evangelist & former glue maker Herb Silverwood's 32 verses, " Go on, go one, go on go on..." Wesleyan zeal
4. **Queen Mary's** ardour to pass out the tract, "Safety Certainty & Enjoyment"-she knew the value of a soul
5. **King George 6th** in speaking to his equerries observed of preachers at Westminster Abbey “That message will /will not feed souls”. The king was at one time a Windsor Gospel assembly bible study member.

ROMANS 13

Here we find ourselves in an everyday life situation. What are we to do in respect of our political social and personal lifestyle duties? We have a model here second to none -directions as to human government, neighbourliness & enlightened living.

THE AMERICAN LEGAL MODEL

Legislature, Grand Jury and the Chief Executive & *Clinton-Lewinsky*

For once we are invited to give our opinion-the world is appraised of the detail. The Grand jury and House of Representatives for better or for worse has opened a case and the procedure of impeachment to the world's eyes. At no time within recent history has the mind of the human race been taken to the issue of the balance between the legislative and executive branches of government as in the **Clinton-Lewinsky** affair. We were daily balancing our assessment of prurience. Questioning approached close to the scurrilous. Internet promulgation of testimony which was given without previous knowledge on **Mr. Clinton's** part was distributed worldwide. No matter the way it was done – whether intended to bring down the chief officer of state or not – the case let the world in to give its verdict and the impact of world public opinion really did come into play.

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTIONAL MODEL

The standing ovation at the United Nations (21.9.98) still kindly acclaimed a most able executive. Once upon a time the constitution of Britain enabled our chief executives to be impeached – but the statute was erased as bad law many years ago. The short and long of it is that it is no part of British

law to makes a man incriminate himself by trip questions under a 4 hour brainstorming session. Should the legislature of the most powerful country in the world impeach on those grounds it will hasten the day that such legislation comes into contempt. The powers that be in the United States were in a political dogfight. The best resolution is the British model – where voluntary resignation on advice for conduct unacceptable in public life is to be preferred. Paul respected the powers that be.

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

The individual ruler is not what Paul is accrediting. He uses the Greek word *εξουσια* for Powers – where **Aristotle Demosthenes and Sophocles** 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 defending by the death penalty and other censures the wellbeing of the citizen. It is, he argues, also the "organiser of public works or" [*Greek λειτουργια public performances*] inasmuch as it had like the High priest responsibility for matters affecting all-in this case roads security etc. 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 come now to the commands that have to do with our immediate duty to our neighbour under God.

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 wife is a good example as she is both *near* to her husband and also completes or *fulfils* the man she loves. A man ought to neither abuse his partner nor misuse his neighbour. The principle is kindness and partnership in free association but not motivated by profit.

THE PRIVATE DOMAIN – WALK HONESTLY 11ff

1. The appointment worth waiting for – every noble Christian life expects Christ's coming

Paul does not literally mean "honest" v13 – he means "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

2. *The Victory worth fighting for – every noble Christian life yields all to Christ*

The second call is to steel ourselves – "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**"

3. *The Inspiration worth seeking – every noble Christian needs to be Holy; this involves the Spirit & the book.*

Instead put on the clothes of the gracious Lord and have no designed intention for things that cater for the body – do not inspire yourself in these directions moving towards lust that must be constantly fed and becomes a habit.

It is notable how Christ was clothed with a priestly garment He walked as one that bore others burdens and lived purely. **Spurgeon** "A Christian is the most gentlest of men."

Illustrations: Chapman "To anything that dims my vision of Christ or takes my taste for the bible away or cramps praying I say "No". Life is like a garden – **Sow** Promptitude politeness prayer. **Squash** gossip criticism apathy, **Lettuce** have faith, truth and unselfishness. Above all **Turnup** at Church. **President Garfield** gave this advice; "Make few promises, speak truth, live within your means, keep good company".

ROMANS 14

The liberty of the Christian man – The Master said, "Nothing that enters a man can make him unclean"-Mark 7.18. The guidance of the Council of Jerusalem was, "No burden save abstaining from food offered to idols and from blood and animals not kosher"(Acts 15.29) In Rome 7 years later "What seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" is contextualised

KING ALFRED & MARTIN LUTHER

It is **FF Bruce** in his comment on Acts 15 who alludes to the Saxon king as writing the bible food laws into Anglo-Saxon law. **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"

What is our guidance today on matters where the doctrine of salvation is not at risk and those who use liberty with maturity have no qualms and those who are keen to maintain a position feel scripture censure exists?

FIVE PRINCIPLES

The principle of the *weaker brother* demands no censorship of a private sincere conviction, (vvl-4) though this may be based on lesser facts (*cf. Genesis 1.29 & 9.3- the rightness of eating vegetables as opposed to meat*). The **second principle** is

judgment of Christ vv.9-12. The Lord died and rose to give each of us life and it is to him we answer at the last as during our lifetime. **The third principle** respects what seems good to the Holy Spirit – namely that we continue to promote love for each other and the biblical truths of righteousness peace and joy in the church which is indwelt by the Holy Ghost and so please God and our fellows in our living (vv13-18) – that is testimony **The fourth principle** vv.19-21 is peace amongst ourselves and up building. Here notably Paul gives his own verdict plainly that "all food is clean"-but if someone is to fail in the faith through our practice we must apply tighter rules to personal liberty... **The fifth principle** is conscience – do your own thinking "believe your beliefs". There is in this context a quotation from Christ in an old Copy of the bible Manuscripts in Luke 7 where a man was working on the Sabbath and Jesus reputedly said, " **If you know what you are doing you are blessed**" i.e. if you have a reason you can give to God in your conscience.

SUMMARY AND ORDER OF PRINCIPLES

1. People matter. Don't censure others with genuine views. Seek to instruct and widen the frame of knowledge.
2. Christ is Lord Let God be the judge cf. v.10 The *βημα* throne against *βρωμα* meats is far more vital
3. Let the Holy Spirit guide. Keep your affection for one another and solidarity in matters of salvation
4. Build one another up i.e. Edification in faith
5. 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 Lords 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 end of the day.

RIGHTEOUSNESS PEACE &. JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST-FINDING A CONTEXT

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. So it is with the mature Christian. That is what we must do – *walk in step with the Holy Spirit* so we shall understand with the early Church what seems good to the Spirit of God and us today.

GARIBALDI IS COMING

The Italians in the 1850's were ruled by the heavy handed Bourbons. But the patriot **Garibaldi** – a great defender of liberty progressively relieved the country of its oppression. People wrote slogans everywhere 'Garibaldi is coming'. From the great sins of our day there will be relief only when Christ comes to bring *in* his kingdom meantime to elect that He be Lord of every heart and life is the liberty that we are called to exercise above all others. "If The Son shall make you free you are free indeed."

Romans 15

This chapter teaches we are to please others not ourselves. Using the testimony of the Psalms Paul urges the gospel is for all people. Paul re-emphasises his commission as a man who lives to his calling. His plan to visit Rome emerges here

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". Paul, himself a reviler – is ever so conscious that the *patience* of Christ in his atoning death – and the Lord's *faithfulness* encouraged as it should all people enduring persecution for Christ. Both David & Paul knew the barbs of invective-and both shielded others.

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. The NIV calls it the "spirit of unity" – in depth it is the "practical wisdom" needed in the life of Gods people cf. "prudence" of Pilgrims Progress & Proverbs 8.12. In the latter proverbial setting it is the skill to make naked or reveal (*ARAMAH*). Wisdom is the understanding of the depth of revelation. It is as a marriage bed-a combination of love and union with deep lasting commitment and purpose. This prudence is divine bounty and enables men to share the love that exists between Father and Son and to be prepared for the glory – and in the interim carry that message of love to a needy world.

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.

On account of their capacity he wrote boldly in places to remind them of the grace of apostleship and his ministry (*LEITOURGOS*) i.e. how he was to go without being chargeable to any – but to serve the Gentile church everywhere. He is a sacrificing priest of the gospel – the Gentiles are the **sacrifice** pleasing to God, having been set apart in the Holy Spirit. I glory in the circle of Christ in the things with reference to God-but I will not speak of anything Christ has not wrought through me. The range of his ministry includes "word and deed" that commends the gospel, the circle of "signs and wonders" that promote worship, and the "increase in the circle (*or influence*) of the Spirit of God" – that strengthens mission. Paul had no ambition to build on other's foundation but beyond (Isa. 52.15). **They didn't read it in the law but saw it – they didn't hear it in the Midrash but understood it by the mediator** – a preamble to the great 53rd of Isaiah – the presentation of the crucified Lord.

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.

ROMANS 16

This chapter is known for its reference to the “second-fiddles” of the New Testament. Paul’s greetings conclude this great letter. They open with reference to one of the outstanding women of the NT-Phoebe – “inspired by the bright or pure one”. Here are 17 households-well-loved people-people who toiled – people who were tested – all of whom reflected Jesus. Paul had great expectations of these Roman believers! They were courageous and yet vulnerable – here the dangerous tension of growth and scandal requires personal pastoralia and particular advice.

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.

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. Lk. 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 AD 45-48, 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 Mark15.21 – 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.

PAUL’S FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The names Luke, Jason and Sosipater are coupled with the term “Kindred” and Timothy is mentioned as a fellow labourer – being so dear he is put first. Gaius the guest of Paul – one estranged from his native Rome – greets them – as does Erastus the city steward and his brother (*coily named*” *where can you find bread?*).

DOXOLOGY – Christ can use you in harvesting according to the gospel and it's heralding – in line with the mystery silent through anions 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.

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. The NIV calls it the “spirit of unity” – in depth it is the “practical wisdom” needed in the life of Gods people – cf. “prudence” of Pilgrims Progress & Proverbs 8.12. In the latter proverbial setting it is the skill to make naked or reveal (*ARAMAH*). Wisdom is the understanding of the depth of revelation. It is as a marriage bed – a combination of love and union with deep lasting commitment and purpose. This prudence is divine bounty and enables men to share the love that exists between Father and Son and to be prepared for the glory – and in the interim carry that message of love to a needy world.

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. It is 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).

FINIS

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