

Commentary in Brief

on

Paul's Letter to the Romans

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Preface

This brief commentary represents the principal lecture comments made during the Nine Month Adult Class Study of Romans 1965-66, at the Union Church of Manila.

Introduction

Paul writes this letter to the Christian Church at Rome at about AD-58. He has not yet visited this great capital city but it is his long anticipated goal to visit there. He has many friends in Rome who have moved there from the other cities where he has journeyed and so from them he is well informed on the situation, problems and significance of the churches in the capital city. This letter is the crowning achievement of Paul's life and more than any of his other writings reveals a carefulness and sense of organization which may mean that the Apostle intended that this letter above all of the others would be his major work.

1:1-6 Greeting We sense the precision and over-all thoughtfulness that is the mark of this book at the very outset. This greeting is more detailed and conscious than any of the other greetings of Paul's letters. The greeting is a theological survey in itself:

- (1) Paul's Motivation is Expressed - He belongs to the Gospel which belongs to Christ.
- (2) Christ is Introduced - His divine and human nature is affirmed, his messianic fulfillment of all that men longed for (symbolized by the reference to David and Prophets) and its seal in the resurrection, is also stated.
- (3) The Implications of Christ' Reality and Coming are Affirmed - This means that there is Good tidings at the heart of reality, that is, there is hope and meaning to life and we as men must now seriously consider Christ' claim upon our lives. He deserves to reign.

With this greeting Paul closes with his favorite sentence "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ". He favors the words "Grace" and "Peace" and they appear here along with the word "Father" as they do in every other of his letters. "Father": Paul's God is not the diety of contemptive ideology but "our Father". This is the word of relationship, of character; it is intensely personal, generic and prior. There is no word in the family of Indo-European languages which has preserved even it's distinctive sound as tenaciously as "Father"; its arresting sound persists from Sanskrit to English. Paul has chosen a word which was given to him by his Lord to describe God in the profoundest and simplest expression possible for men, and a word which tells the most theologically and existential-

ly important fact about God: He is knowable by mere man as a father.

This Holy Father shares his nature and his authority with the Son. Paul puts these awesome convictions very simply in the greeting of every letter. The Father and the Son are prior to that for which men universally long for and seek: grace and peace. Paul's God is the God of these realities, the author of these gifts.

Grace and peace are a subtle choice of words. They bring together the aspirations of two great cultures. Charisma to the Greek and Shalom to the Jew were words that each in a curious manner expressed like catchwords the synthesis of all their great words and ideas. Each word becomes idealistic and philosophical starting points for the building of elaborate systems of thought. Shalom is the more primitive aspiration with its longing for health (survival) and Charisma the more subtle in its longing for relationship and gifts beyond the simpler and more fundamental Hebrew aspiration. Paul radically alters whatever their previous meaning had been by placing each in captivity to the Father and Son. In this way each word has been personalized and given inter-personal significance beyond anything that they were capable of in their previous settings. They are no longer the sentimentally and idealistically affirmed "starting points" of reality. All philosophical systems chose words to pinpoint origins and foundations of reality: Truth, Good, Justice, Dialectical Materialism, Grace, Peace. Historical interpretations and ethical systems are subsequently established upon these prior assumptions concerning the nature of ultimacy. This is not the Biblical starting place. God Himself is the prior fact to every other starting point, therefore everything else and all other words are relative.

In this radical change of starting point Christianity is a totally new kind of idealism without the brittle and intricate framework of human systems. Grace, Peace, Truth, are words from now on that will owe their meaning and power to the God who has revealed Himself in history and who stands behind them. This personalization grants to them more abiding inner force than they ever enjoyed as the heroes of philosophy.

1:8-15
Paul's Self-Confidence

Paul expresses his admiration of the Romans and promptly announces that this letter will precede his own "in the flesh" visit. He informs them that it is his opinion that such a visit will be to their benefit, and not only theirs but his as well. This very brief para-graph gives to us another example of Paul's self confidence. He is aware of the fact that in other places his presence has been a positive fact and so without hesitation he notifies the Romans of what they too will have in store for them when he actually arrives. Some perhaps might be offended at such a high degree of self-esteem but there is in it a very deep thread of honest, refreshing visibility for which Paul is famous. Precisely because of paragraphs such as these the reader comes to know Paul the man and feel an empathy with him as a person of unusual candor.

Paul has a high sense of commitment to fulfill his task which he recognizes as an obligation to all men, sharing with them the Gospel of Christ. Note that Paul has not really defined what he means by Gospel apart from the phrases in the greeting that made it the gift of God concerning His Son.

1:16-17
The Gospel

As if he anticipates a question concerning what exactly the Gospel is he makes a few vivid statements.

- (1) The Gospel is Good - There is no need to be ashamed of it.
- (2) The Gospel is Powerful - This power is even equal to man's

most critical need. It is able to salvage man.

(3) The Gospel is Universal - The tribal and nationalistic barriers are once and for all down.

(4) The Gospel is God Speaking for Himself - In it his character (righteousness is being revealed).

(5) The Gospel is for Man - Mere Man By faith man has the privilege of knowing God and His grace.

1:18 - 3:20	This section is divided into three parts:
<u>The Prosecution</u>	I - The "they" part 1:18-32
<u>Section:</u>	
<u>God's No</u>	II - The "you" part 2: 1-29
	III - The "we" part 3: 1-20

Like a shrewd prosecution attorney Paul seems to address all of humanity with a sweeping, overwhelming attack. He pounces upon every ploy in our defenses in one way or another disarming us before the sheer force of God's "No" to man's chaos. And then as suddenly as he began the prosecution the wise apostle breaks it off, strides across the court room and begins the defense. Both the prosecution section and defense section are eloquent and profoundly concrete and relevant to man and his crises.

1:18-32 They This broad and general judgement passage probes generic man and analyses his problematic nature.

1:18-23 The Origins of Crisis Paul asserts that man's crises is originated in his broken relationship with Almighty God. When man substitutes a false god for the true God, however this may happen, the results are always the same: Man discovers the tragic decline of idolitry. Paul is very subtle here, he notes rhetorically that when man ceases to worship God as god and choses some other fact as his center the result is always a decline.

Man

birds

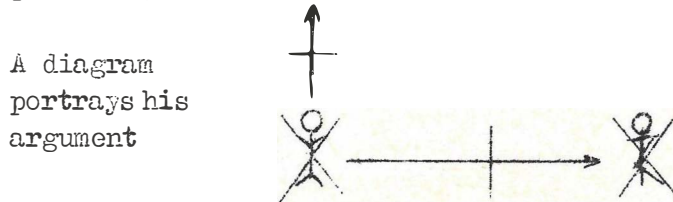
animals

reptiles

His point is that even though man chooses the greatest thing in creation, man himself, to worship - the fact is that man as the object of worship cannot bear the weight of worship and inevitably collapses. We experience this phenomena in our own lives whenever we worship another person or ourselves. No mortal man is equal to the responsibility receiving worship. Sooner or later the hero lets his followers down and then begins the inevitable decline. I may shift to the worship of birds with all their gravity defying greatness but they too collapse and through the trivial little gods I journey until at last I am worshipping that which I fear symbolized by the "snakes". What an irony! This is the classic irony. This is the terrible end of every idolitry. It always falls apart toward its last stage which is some sort of alliance with evil itself as if a bargan with the gods of death might make it so well for the worshippinger at the end.

1:24-27 Internal Chaos Paul now observes that when man is broken in his relationship with his creator, the result is internal confusion and the loss of identity. Homosexuality is an example Paul cites of man turned in upon himself, confused as to who he is and what is his destiny.

1:28-32 Outward Hurtfulness Following the break upward and the chaos within is the tragedy of outward, inter-personal, sinfulness. In this ethical listhe points up the results of man's original failure:



One penetrating 20th century literary description of this three-fold crises is William Golding's Lord of the Flies. When the boys lose contact with the mountain top with its symbols of hope, the fire and the parachutest, the result is that their idolitry (the inordinate hunger for meat and subsequent hunting ceremony) creates an internal chaos and disintegration in the individual boys. They lose their identities (symbolized by their masks) and finally in a furious ceremonial moment they mistake the boy Simeon for a pig and kill him. In other words, when they lose their own sense of identity so does all humanity around them. Finally, as Paul warns they not only killed Simeon by error but by the end of the story they have idealized the killing of man and are just about to kill Ralph when the story is suddenly interrupted.

2:1-29
"You"

2:1-11 God is the Real Judge Paul now seeks to make his general prosecution more specific and powerful. He now proposes the argument that whenever a man judges his neighbor, which implies bearing judgement on the basis of an external standard, he inadvertently has declared himself guilty too, since he is in the final analysis also involved in the very things he strongly condemns in the neighbor. He assures the court room that God in fact is the judge and that he righteously administers his own judgements.

2:12-16 With or Without the Law The fact is that men suffer the effect of inter-personal hurtfulness. Whether or not they are able to verbally describe the law of gravity we suffer from it when we step off a ladder whether we realized that it as a law existed or not. The same can be observed of the Ten Commandments. Adultery, false witness, covetness simply do break human relationships and hinder a man's true fulfillment as an individual, whether he is able to articulate the law or not.

2:17-24 Prosecution Against the Elite Paul assumes an almost bitter tone in this section as he attacks the self assured and smug attitude of the one who feels not only that he has a favored position with God but that he is a true specimen of greatness for others to follow.

2:25-29 Signs and Reality The Apostle concludes the "you" section with the introduction of a very important and anti-nationalistic thesis. Real Jewishness he says is not a matter of certain signs or symbols or even of physical heritage but of that which is deeply granted by God within the individual. To say the least this is a radical word and not likely to be welcomed by those who are zealous for the "true, unadulterated, pure,

racial stock" Paul is aware of this radical nature of the Gospel and delights in pressing his point.

3:1-8 "We...I" Paul anticipates the logical question that will emerge.
The Mission And "What is the use of being a Jew by birth, and what has been the
The Failure value of Israel? He has one simple reply. To the Jew was given
the treasure of the burden or will of the Lord, and this burden
(oracle) has been given to share with all the world. "Though we Jews,
and even I have failed in this task God has not failed", this is his
thesis. The purpose of Israel was not to reign as a special race but to
serve and share the Gospel of Messianic hope. This very important clar-
ification of the role of the Holy people Israel is now the meaning also
for the new Israel, the Church.

3:9-20 All men are on level ground and with this major point ringing
Final Argument in our ears Paul casts together in one mosaic a random collec-
of the Prosecution tion of Old Testament judgement passages to give this argument
added forcefulness. Then suddenly the whole mood shifts as
Paul strides to the other side of the court room and begin his comments
for the defense.

3:21-31 The character (righteousness) of God has broken though; God
God's Yea has spoken for himself in man's behalf. His word is not con-
The Defense of Man trolled by any previous word though law and prophetic aspiration
point irresistibly toward it. This word has come along side
near man in flesh itself, concretely, and man's best move is to
open himself to this radical salvation. Paul also notes the
costliness of the gift as God takes upon himself man's aliena-
tion. And all of this is for all men regardless of their
heritage therefore in the new order boasting and religious
priorities are inappropriate.

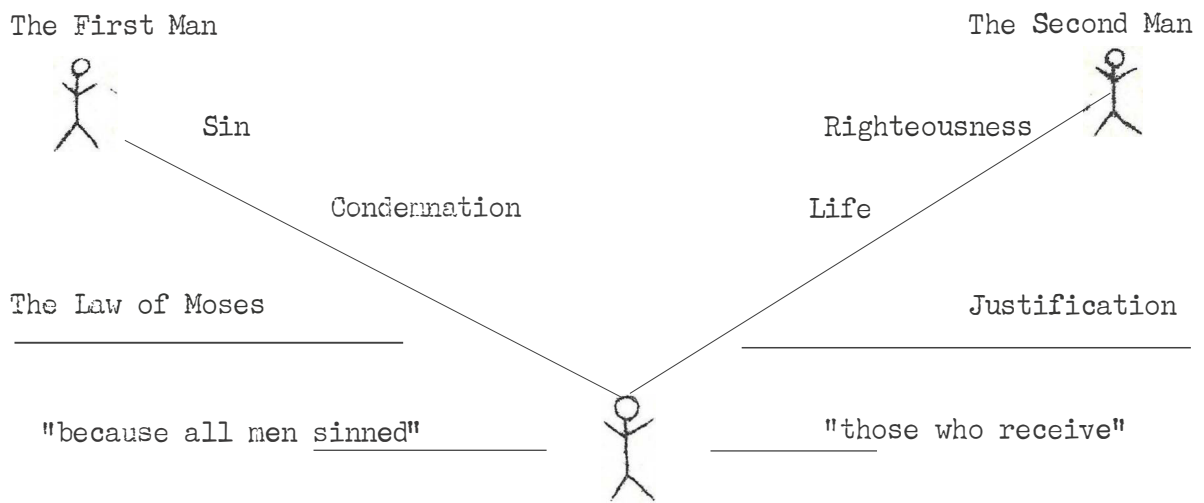
4:1-12 It seems important to Paul to defeat the false senses of Pride
The Boasting Issue and "Rank" at the outset of his defense. How good this news
is to us! From now on we shall not need to desperately
gather up references and credits since Christ' grace is all we need.
Even Abraham and David bear witness to this thrilling liberation in the
new age of the Gospel. Rites of Old Testament law like Circumcision are
"after the fact" signs. The fact itself, namely God's grace is what is
prior and therefore crucial.

4:13-25 Paul now has the boldness to dare a distinctly New Testament
Abraham and Faith interpretation of the Father of Israel himself, Abraham. Paul
asserts that the key to Abraham is not faith, not works or rites
of the law or for that matter the law itself. We can see between the
lines that Paul here as in the whole of the Galatian letter is attempting
to head off those legalistic Christians who want to insure the law of
Moses and subsequent Jewish ritual and nationalistic law a place of equal
importance to the simple faith of the believer in Christ Himself. Paul
goes behind the law giver, Moses, and shows that the promise of God is
prior to all law and therefore not to be constrained by legal technicali-
ties such as circumcision tests etc. As a matter of fact, faith in
Christ of itself is all we need and that basic faith is what God calls
righteousness, (justification).

5:1-5 At Peace The climax for Paul of our faith in God's mighty act in our behalf is peace. Peace "with God", "through Christ", "to this", "in which we stand". Peace is the result of a relationship; it is the rest of justification. Paul even assures the Christians at Rome that the peace God is granting them will not vanish in the context of suffering.

5:6-11 When We Were Helpless At precisely the moment when we were leveled, when the court room drama has made its mark and we feel guilty, perhaps unredeemably so, at that moment Paul announces, the love of God as an act (the Life, Death, and Victory of Christ), as word and work which comes to us and sets us free for relationship with God.

5:12-21 The Two Adams For the second time in this letter Paul reaches into the roots of humanity or a symbol of what has happened in the Gospel:



In this survey of the human crises and hope Paul first of all notes that all men share in the legacy of the first man, though he preserves the individual dignity of men by the interesting phrase - "because all men sinned". In other words, our share in a common crisis is not an automatic, icy or mechanical truth. Each man has a unique share in the fall of man and each man shares in the legacy of fall along side of all other men.

In the Gospel the second Adam's victory is also our legacy, for all men and yet also preserved from a mechanical impersonal nature by the phrase "those who receive...". The crucial fact is that God's grace is not something that I trigger or gain by various means but has already been granted as my rightful legacy. I must receive it, but that is all; I can never earn it or merit it.

6:1-23 How Shall We Live Paul faces immediately a strong question: Since Grace is victorious over sin, shall we sin to experience even greater grace? This question initiates a penetrating and lengthy consideration of the Christian Way of Life: The result of Grace in the patterns and responses of a man's practical living. Paul's confidence in Grace is unshaken though the sweeping affirmation of the sufficiency of Grace invites the above question.

I 6:2-9 - The Indicative Argument

Paul's first move is to argue from the point made in the great "Adam-Christ"

portrait. When Christ died in the behalf of man, the consequence of that sovereign act of Grace is that in effect, we died with Christ, therefore sin ought not to reign for what is an objective, indicative reason. It has no right to reign; Christ has grappled with its fury. It can therefore only sway a man's life by deception.

II 6:11-13 - The Subjective Argument

Paul moves almost imperceptibly from the simple statement of indicative to the challenge of imperative. Because of the factual triumph we ought not allow our "arms and legs" to be subject to sin's tyranny; rather, he calls man's "members" to be subject to God.

III 6:14-23 The question is repeated, the argument given more extensive breadth, and the very significant word "sanctification" is introduced to the reader.

Sanctification: This is Paul's word to describe the Christian Way of Life. In the context, it is a lively word, an "en-route" word, and a "given" word. As with justification, sanctification is granted by grace: Literally to be brought into the presence of God, to the place where God is, where his character overshadows our life. Not so much "set apart for God's use" as "set within God's presence" where His will for living is caught through relationship.

7:1-25

The Gospel Interruption

7:1-12

The law and This New Reality

The forward thrust of Paul's letter hesitates for a few sentences. The discussion of law in its new place raises problems as to the law's inherent worth. Paul is unwavering in his assertion that salvation and sanctification are non-legal, yet the law is holy and good. In these sentences, he heads off any reestablishment of law as the mode of living while preserving the law's biblically grounded worth.

7:13-25

The Terror of Sin and God's Great Reply

Man cannot blame a law slanted against his welfare, but instead it is his own sin, which Paul earlier defined as a man's hostile decision against God, himself, others (in that order) which makes every man, whoever he is, incapable of ultimate gain against these weights. Paul shares (in the present tense) the testimony of his own absolute need for the Saviour to resolve his life even now as a Christian. Only grace flooding in can make a man fit for relationship with the Heavenly Father. Paul cannot get beyond the Gospel; it ministers to him throughout his life. A man never outgrows the Christ of the Gospel, or Christ's absolute sufficiency to make the Christian whole. There is no wholeness apart from this Christ.

8:1-39

Sanctification is God's will for Us

8:1-17 - The only hope for man is to be in Jesus Christ. In this presence, there is no condemnation; instead, its antithesis is our gift, Freedom. The Christian 'lives according to the Spirit' - The crucial ennoblement in the living of the Christian's life is the "Spirit".

The Holy Spirit: Paul never sets out to carefully define the Spirit. Note the references to Deity within one sentence "...in the Spirit, ...the Spirit of God... the Spirit of Christ... if Christ is in you..." Rom. 8:9, 10.

In this significant passage, Paul rejects careful definition of the triune nature of God. The Holy Spirit is the character of God revealing Himself to us, within us. The Spirit grants life (8:12), the Spirit leads (8:14), the Spirit sets free (8:15), the Spirit bears witness to the Christian of Christ and the Christian's sonship (8:16), the Spirit helps the Christian in his weakness (8:26)

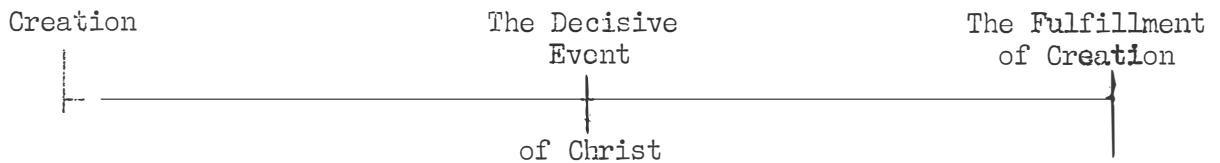
The primary ministry of the Spirit is to assure the Christian of Christ and of His sufficiency. When a man knows Christ, he knows the Spirit.

8:18-27

The Creation and the Sons of God

Paul suddenly plunges these heirs of God into their significant importance to all of creation. In this brilliant portrait of historical overview, Paul begins what shall preoccupy his following chapters- the Sovereign Lord, the People of God and History. For Paul, the joint heir (The Christians) share with Christ in the fulfillment of all creation.

Note the linear view of history that Paul portrays:



8:28-30

God will not be Thwarted in His Decision in Our Behalf

Note that in this magnificent portrait of sovereign grace, the response of the Christian individual is preserved and made of critical importance. "...with those who love him." In the similar affirmation of Romans 5, it is "...those who receive...". Paul welds faith and love together so that they cannot fairly be separated in his thinking. One does not exist without the other.

God has known ahead and decided ahead that we shall be conformed to the image of Christ, so that through us many may be blessed. Paul's mood in pondering God's decision is not fatalistic and mechanical but tender and assuring as the following sentences of Romans 8 confirm. Here is God's strong decision for his sons. This passage once again preserves man's faith in right focus. Our faith does not create God's grace, but responds toward a grace already there, already spoken toward us. Paul demands that this prior love be noted. It is the ground for Christian certitude and hope in the face of both personal weakness and the terrors of the age.

8:31-39

He Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

These final sentences are of matchless beauty and poetry so that the essential impact is overwhelming.

8:31 - "What shall we say -- if God is for us." Note that in ~~this~~ sentence, Paul gives his own commentary upon 28-30. It is the "God is for us" section.

"...who can be against us." Paul suggests that there is a "who" against this son of God, but typically with Paul, he refuses to become preoccupied with threats, with danger. The thrust of the sentence rather insists that compared with God's decision for us there can be no ultimate or lasting peril against us.

8:33-34 - Only Christ has the right of judgement and who is this judge but the same friend who gave himself. A man set free from fear of condemnation is able to face neighbor and foe unafraid and without hostility.

Paul finally asserts that the heart of God's character is love which will not abandon, so that there is no force whether good (angels) or bad (persecution) able to divide his sons from the sure hand of God.

9:1-5
The Apostle's Heart Shows Through Twice in this section (chapters 9, 10, and 11) Paul shares with the Romans his profound concern for the welfare of his Race (See 10:1). Paul's attitude constitutes the richest Christian stance regarding men now outside of Christ. He hopes for their salvation in Christ; this is his prayer. At the same moment, the apostle affirms throughout this section, as will be noted, the right and privilege of God to be singularly sovereign. The mixture of these two threads constitutes for Paul the foundation for his doctrine of prayer: on the one hand a confidence in the Lord's judgments, and on the other, an open statement of the conviction and aspiration of the believer.

9:6-33
Sovereign King In this section Paul defends the right of God to judge any people, even his own. The apostle anticipates questions; each question is moral in its intent which proves Paul's concern for and sensitivity to the looming moral issues of history. His reply to each question (9:14, 9:19) is to throw the problem into the Lord's hand, and to affirm His right to reign. This resolution of the moral questions of justice and fairness is only satisfying to the individual who is able to trust the God of Romans 1-8. If the reader is battling feelings of anger or grudge toward God, he will not welcome Paul's candid confidence in the God of the Gospel to do all things according to His will. In a profound sense, Paul's solution to these probing issues is adequate and a genuine resolution. Only the God of the Gospel can possibly reverse these right judgments.

10:1-12
A Man Can Only Live by Faith This chapter is a powerful discussion of the vivid contrast between the religion of law and the revelation of grace. Paul here seeks to explore deeply the basic divine reply to the tragic error of Phariseism. The law endeavors to bring God down within reach by means of devout human performance, or to make Christ alive by religious practice. Paul's Christ does not need this kind of assistance.

11:1-36
Hope Lies Close to Heartbreak Having spoken in chapter 9 with the stern and overwhelming language of total judgement, the apostle like the Old Testament prophets softens the language of judgement with the word of hope. In the Bible, wherever the theme of judgment is unfolded, the response of divine Grace lies close at hand (i.e. Isaiah 6:1-13. "...until cities lie waste... the land is utterly desolate... the holy seed is its stump" Note the immediate proximity of total judgment and amazing living hope). Paul sees a mystery in the history of Israel with an ending that shall honor the Father. As in Romans 8:28 where the testing of the believer is to be a blessing to others, Paul's historical overview sees Israel blessed because of their fathers" and the Gentiles.

The passage is interrupted and concluded with a hymn of praise and a direct appeal for surrender to this Lord. (Romans 12:1-2 really is logically an intricate part of the mood and thrust of Romans 9, 10, and 11).

12:1-2 These two verses unfold a matchless summation of Romans 1-11.
"I Appeal to You" Note the forthright appeal. There is something about the Gospel that enables men to encounter their brethren with refreshing openness and directness.

This phrase "by the mercies of God" shall reappear again and is a crucial formula which for Paul sums up his Gospel and provides for him the motivation for faith and for ethics. We believe, because God first found us in grace; we love, because God first loved us.

"Present" - This is the identical word translated "yield" in Romans 6:16. No verb could be simpler as in fact faith is just this definite and demanding.

"Your bodies" - Paul will not permit any escape from the demand of faith. This word is the most inclusive word he could find. Faith presents the real, whole self, not the elusive "soul" but the knowable "body". Here is no Grecian disdain for flesh, for Paul's Gospel welcomes the whole man as the "living sacrifice" which is by God's grace, "holy, acceptable, the reasonable ritual". This is what Paul is saying: All that God desires from me is my real self given in response to His grace. It is His grace now that makes this alive sacrifice acceptable to the Father. "Do not..." - "challenge" the tyranny of the earth and experience the renewal of God at work within your life. Force a crisis with the world conformities and see God at work.

"That you may prove..." - and you will discover the wholeness and totally good will of God in your own life.

12:3-8 In considering a Christian pattern for living, Paul begins
Sermon on the Mount with grace and then probes the individual's self view before
Revisited God. His ethical rule unfolds:

Seeing myself in the context of my faith relationship before the Father, I see myself in the context of my neighbor, seeking each gift to aid the neighbor. Paul here as in I Cor. 12,13, and 14, implies that "gifts" can be destructive unless they are within the context of grace, faith and community (i.e., if wisdom makes me feel superior to my neighbor, I am a curse to the body of Christ, or if my act of mercy is grudging (Rom. 12:8), I am harmful to the whole.

12:9-21 Paul moves from the general to the particular. Almost at
Proverbic Gospel random as with Old Testament Proverbic Literature, Paul challenges the man of grace-faith to live deeply in the will of saint to return good in the face of persecuting hostility. This is distinctive of the Gospel which is genuinely original and creative. Men have returned anger for anger for centuries. There's nothing new in retribution, but the Gospel has a completely new response to the primary human sins in their man to man terrors. Here is a new solution, which calls upon the grace of God's work. Paul suggests with the image "coals of fires" that the result is more creative and powerful for the neighbor's good than other cheaper, less demanding responses.

13:1-7 Within the context he has established Paul calls upon Christians
The Christian to be good citizens of the State, but in making this
as a Secularist simple point he deals a deadly blow to the historic presupposition of tyranny. He affirms the sovereignty of the God of the Gospel in every place. The Christian is no blind adherent to authority but

must be the interpreter of the State within the greater context of the will of God. This paragraph calls the Christian into active involvement in the "secular" because of the Lordship of Christ over the whole life of man.

13:8-11 This brief thesis really belongs with 13:1-7 as a kind of incredible
"Owe No One reassessment of the Christian's responsibilities toward other men or
Anything" the state. It is as if Paul reverses the trend which 1-7 seems to
begin, that of particularizing areas of responsibility and our action and
now gives one grand overview which overrules every particularization.
This is a genuine simplification of the Christian pattern of life. The
Chris-tian's one debt is to love his neighbor. Note Paul's commentary on
the intent of the law when he says that love "does no wrong to a neighbor"
and so fulfills the law. This is a dramatic interpretation of the purpose
of law, to protect the neighbor. Legalism reverses this intent and uses
the law to elevate the self and judge the neighbor. This gives a clue to
one of the reasons why legalistic motivations are so regularly challenged
in the New Testament.

13:11-14 At this point it is appropriate to observe how this whole section,
Armour of Light Romans 12:3-15:6 is a kind of commentary on the sermon on the
Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Note that every theme in the Romans
12:3-15:6 is in some way pondered in the Matthew passage. It is the same
form of literature, and each depends upon the authority of the Saviour for
its distinctive meaning and motivational possibility.

Paul challenges his Roman friends to arm themselves with light (an unlikely
armour from the viewpoint of the military) and frankly live for Christ.
Note the absence of panic; he does not say "The day is far spent and night
is coming" but rather as one certain of victory "The night is going to give
way to light".

14:1-4 Paul considers the difficult problem of the relationships within
Strength Welcomes the family of God. Note his understanding of the nature of spi-
the Weak ritual weakness. The man weak in faith is characterized by the
argumentative spirit regarding tightly held legalisms and ritual.
Each of these is an invasion into Christianity from other than
distinctively Christian sources. There is nothing Christian about legalism
or ritualism. Paul suggests that the man insecure in his relationship
with God will necessarily import odd or specialized observances, laws, etc.
to bolster an uncertain faith. Paul's counsel to the man of faith is that
he welcome (Greek- "take to yourself") these weaker brothers, not on the
negative ground of debate which only serves to drive them more completely
into their preoccupation but rather to minister to their deepest
longing--to be accepted by God and man. Such an encounter by stronger
brother toward weaker will confirm to him that neither caustic legalisms or
complex ritual is the road to grace.

14:5-12 Paul continues to press his point. The judgment of a brother is
No Man Lives to alien to the will of God. He thereby cuts the nerve center to the
Himself damaging feelings of superiority or inferiority among the people
of God; rather the Gospel has welded our destinies into one so that no
man lives or dies unto himself.

14:13-23 The Apostle grants a creative rule of mind. The Christian's
Peace and Up-Building goal is to see peace and mutual up-building. He should be
neither preoccupied with regulationism or anti-regulationism
for the Kingdom does not consist in such matters. The key is the walk
of faith.

15:1-6 As in the Philippian letter, Paul proceeds toward a conclusion and
Four Endings then as a new concern crowds in upon his mind he continues the
 letter. This paragraph is a beautiful conclusion to the whole of the
book as well as to the ethical section. He inserts a brief comment
regarding the Old Testament which reveals his feelings regarding the
purpose of the Scriptures: That which instructs and encourages and
establishes the man of hope in the God of encouragement. Also his profound
concern for the unity and fellowship of believers is affirmed.

15:7-13 The thought of "one voice" initiates another thrust for the apostle,
One Voice where he seeks to finally draw the Gentiles and Jews together in Christ.

15:14-33 There is no fearfulness in this itinerant pastor as to God's abili-
I Am Satisfied ty to keep his people. His God is able to keep and hold his people.
 Paul shares this conviction while explaining candidly his reason for
bluntness. He was frank because of Grace. In this conclusion, Paul shares
his life ambition: to be a man of the Gospel and proclaim its message where
men are strangers. The warrior turns to Isaiah 52:15 - "So shall he startle
many nations, the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had
not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall
they consider". This passage lies at the core of the greatest Old Testament
Messianic body of literature. (It is of great interest to note Paul as an
Old Testament interpreter. Many of his quotations of Old Testament sentences
are not literal but rather are free translations of the Hebrew and Septuagint
texts and are in fact commentaries by the apostle upon the text. Note
especially Romans 14:11 where Paul quotes the classic Isaiah 45:23. In his
rendering of this verse, he greatly shortens the actual sentence, yet
preserves and intensifies the point. This sentence is quoted again by Paul in
Philippians 2:10-11, however, the simple indicative future is changed by the
apostle to subjunctive thereby implying a more subtle moral point -- not only
shall every knee bow to this Messiah, but every knee should bow because He
deserves honor not only possesses it. Paul's use of the Old Testament
documents is a rewarding study in itself).
Paul's final sentences are not paternal, "I'll be praying for you" but
rather fraternal: "Strive together with me in your prayers".

16:1-27 Because Paul has seen the Face of God, he is alerted to the faces of
The Faces men. He reveals in this final chapter an affection and knowledge of
 real people in real places. Phoebe is probably the carrier of the
letter.

His most arresting comment is almost hidden in the passing remark that the
God of peace shall destroy Satan under your feet. Paul holds a magnificent
view of the joint-~~hair~~ royal importance of the sons of God which once
again he affirms.

His last words are symbolic of his life. "...Jesus Christ! Amen".

Paul is a man intoxicated with Christ. "Amen" literally is from the
Hebrew, meaning "faithful".