



Revelation, Relationship, Reality

There is no telling what may happen when people begin to study the Epistle to the Romans. What happened to Augustine, Luther, Wesley and Barth launched great spiritual movements which have left their mark in world history. But similar things have happened, much more frequently, to very ordinary people as the words of this Epistle came home to them with power.

So, let those who have read thus far be prepared for the consequences of reading further: you have been warned!

F.F. Bruce *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* p.60

Study 1a: Is the GOSPEL RELIGION or REVELATION? (1:1-4)

A. SOURCE OF THE GOSPEL

... set apart for the ministry of the gospel, long before his conversion (cf. Gal.i.15, where he speaks of himself as having been thus set apart from his birth). All the rich and diversified gifts of Paul's heritage (Jewish, Greek and Roman) and upbringing were foreordained by God with a view to his apostolic service. **F.F. Bruce** p.71

A Slave of Jesus Christ. --This was a favourite designation of St Paul. He regarded himself as the purchased possession of his hand Lord and Master. The two ideas of property and service are suggested. There was no serfdom or servility, and yet there was an absolute loyalty in the consciousness of absolute possession. The bond-servant owned nothing, and was nothing, apart from his master. His time, his strength, everything belonged altogether to another. There was nothing nobler to St Paul than to be a slave of the Lord Jesus. He desired to be nothing, to do nothing, to own nothing apart from Him. If this title is not a reality, it is an utter mockery. If it is real, it always brings blessedness; if it is unreal, it must bring shame, for to be called a slave of Jesus Christ and yet to remain enslaved to self is the depth of moral degradation. **W.H.G. Thomas** *Romans* p.35

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN WESLEY: GOD'S NEW NAME

From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ -- This is the usual way wherein the apostles speak, 'God the Father,' 'God our Father.' Nor do they often, in speaking of Him, use the word *Lord*, as it implies the proper name of God, *Jehovah*. In the Old Testament, indeed, the holy men generally said, 'The Lord our God'; for they were then, as it were, servants; whereas now they are sons: and sons so well know their father, that they need not frequently mention his proper name.

John Wesley *Notes* p.517

B. SIGN OF THE GOSPEL

C. SUBJECT OF THE GOSPEL

Both the natures of our Saviour are here mentioned; but the human is mentioned first, because the divine was not manifested in its full evidence till after His resurrection. **John Wesley** *Notes* p.516

Study 1b: Is the GOSPEL RELIGION or RELATIONSHIP? (vv.5-13)

A. WHAT is the SIGNIFICANCE of the BELIEVER?

WE are CALLED --

SERVANTS

He must make it clear for ever that the Ransom which releases also purchases; that the Lord's freeman is the Lord's property ... **H.C.G. Moule** *Expositor's Bible: Romans* p.5

SONS

It is "*the Gospel of God*"; that is, as the neighbouring sentences shew it, the Gospel of the blessed FATHER. Its origin is in the Father's love, the eternal will whence runs the eternal stream of the work of the Son and the power of the Spirit. "God loved the world"; "The Father

sent the Son." The stream leads us up to the mount. **Handley .C.G. Moule** *Romans (Expositor's Bible)* p.13

SAINTS

... 'saints by divine vocation', summoned by God to be His holy people, set apart for Himself ... The words 'Grace and peace', so common in Paul's salutation, probably unite the Greek and Jewish modes of greeting. The Greek says *Chaire!*-- which literally means 'Rejoice!' The Jew says *Shalom!*-- 'Peace!' Only, in uniting these two modes of greeting, Paul changes *chaire*, 'grace'. The grace of God is His free love and unmerited favour to men, imparted through Christ; the peace of God is the well-being which they enjoy through His grace. **F.F. Bruce** *op.cit.* pp.74,75

Christians should remember that they are *saints*; that is persons separated from the world and consecrated to God. They therefore cannot serve themselves or the world, without a dereliction of their character. **Charles Hodge** p.50

B. WHAT is the *SHARE* of the BELIEVER?

GOD

GOSPEL

To be an apostle, therefore, it was necessary to have seen Christ after his resurrection ... and to have a knowledge of his life and doctrines derived immediately from himself. Without this no man could be a witness, he would only report what he had heard from

others, he could bear no independent testimony to what he himself had seen and heard. **Charles Hodge** p.21

FELLOWSHIP

The prayers of St Paul are a study by themselves. See his own accounts of them, to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, and Philemon. Observe their topic; it is almost always the growth of grace in the saints, to their Master's glory. **H.C.G. Moule** *op.cit.* p.26

JOY

Access to the inmost sanctuary of Holy Scripture is granted only to those who come to worship **Joseph Agar Beet** *Romans* p.27

Study 1c: Is the GOSPEL RELIGION or REALITY? (vv.14-17)

A. The GREEK seeks reality in *wisdom* (1 Cor.1:18-25)

To the Greeks, all non-Greeks were 'barbarians' (*barbaroi*, a word which probably imitated the unintelligible sound of foreign languages). **F.F. Bruce** *op.cit.* p.77

That faith, therefore, which is connected with salvation, includes knowledge, that is, a perception of the truth and its qualities; assent, or the persuasion of the truth of the object of faith; and trust, or reliance. The exercise, or state of mind expressed by the word *faith*, as used in the Scriptures, is not mere assent, or mere trust, it is the intelligent perception, reception, and reliance on the truth, as revealed in the gospel. **Charles Hodge** *op.cit.* p.43

B. The ROMAN seeks reality in *power* (Dan.2:40; 7:23)

With such gifts the Corinthians, who had enjoyed the presence of St. Paul, abounded (1 Cor. i.7, xii. 1, xiv. 1). So did the Galatians likewise (Gal. iii. 5); and, indeed, all those churches which had had the presence of any of the apostles had perculiar advantages of this kind, from the laying on of their hands (Acts xix. 6, viii. 17, &c.; 2 Tim. i. 6). **John Wesley** *op.cit.* p.518

C. The JEW seeks reality in *righteousness* (Rom.10:3)

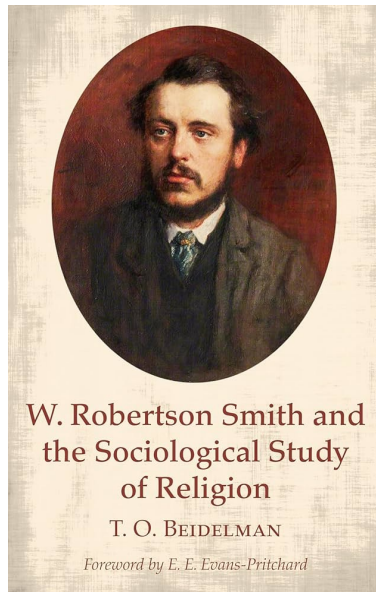
The ideas of right and wrong among the Hebrews are forensic ideas;

that is, the Hebrew always thinks of the right and the wrong as if they were to be settled before a judge. Righteousness is to the Hebrew not so much a moral quality as a legal status. The word "righteous" (*saddiq*) means simply "in the right", and the word "wicked" (*rasha*) means "in the wrong". "I have sinned this time", says Pharaoh, "Jehovah is in the right (A.V. wicked)", Ex. ix.27. Jehovah is always in the right, for He is not only sovereign but self-consistent. He is the fountain of righteousness ... the consistent will of Jehovah is the law of Israel. **W.Robertson Smith** *The Prophets of Israel* pp.71f.

This word "righteousness" should receive the closest possible attention, for it is the essential characteristic of the Gospel as brought forward in this Epistle, that it reveals, not God's love, or mercy, or grace, but His *righteousness*. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** p.32

For Paul, as for many other Jews, 'life' (especially eternal life) and 'salvation' were practically synonymous. If Paul's self-designation as 'a Hebrew of Hebrews' (Phil. iii.5, RV) means (as is probable) that he was the Aramaic-speaking child of Aramaic-speaking parents, he would very likely, when speaking his native tongue, employ the same word *hayye* for both 'life' and 'salvation'. 'It is he who is righteous (justified) by faith that will live' means, therefore, 'it is he who is righteous (justified) by faith that will be saved'. For Paul, life in the sense of salvation begins with justification but goes beyond it (cf. v.9f.); it includes

sanctification (the subject of Rom. vi-viii) and is consummated in final glory (v.2, viii.30) **F.F. Bruce** *op.cit.* p.81



Righteousness Revealed -- and its Seven Great Subthemes

It should be studied with special reference to its great theme, as stated in ch. i. 16,17. In these two verses there are seven terms which go through the entire Epistle and affect every part of it: God, Gospel, Power, Salvation, Righteousness, Faith, Life. So that the theme of Romans is man's reinstatement in righteousness by the provision found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation is provided and made possible for sinful man by a righteousness which is not his own. Like the warp and woof of a piece of cloth, these great thoughts are the very substance of the Epistle. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *op.cit.* p.19