

# The Epistle to the Romans - Part 3

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

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*The sermon explores the themes of Israel's salvation, God's sovereignty and election, and the Gospel published abroad, emphasizing the importance of faith and mercy in attaining righteousness.*

**Scripture:** Romans 14:13, Romans 15:7, Romans 16:17, Romans 16:25

**Topics:** "Christian Unity", "False Teachers"

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## Description

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about the importance of unity and love among believers, emphasizing the need to bear with the weaknesses of others and not to judge or cause them to stumble. He highlights Christ as the ultimate example of selflessness and calls for believers to imitate His love and humility. Gaebelein also addresses the dangers of false teachers who seek to create divisions and deceive through kind words, warning believers to stay away from such influences. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's power to establish and strengthen His people according to the Gospel and the revelation of the mystery of Christ, offering praise and glory to God through Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

### Verses 1-3

Paul speaks of himself in each of these three chapters. Knowing that they rejected the salvation of God, he yearns and sorrows over his kinsmen. In the next chapter he expresses his heart's desire and prayer for their salvation, and in the eleventh chapter he mentions himself as an evidence that God has not cast away His people. The Jews, because he preached salvation to the Gentiles, looked upon him as an enemy of their nation and as a traitor. "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come upon them to the uppermost." Thus he wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:16). In Jerusalem the Jewish mob cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth." They hated him, but he loved his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. It was this mighty love which burned in his soul, which constrained him to go up to Jerusalem, in spite of the warnings given by the Holy Spirit. So intense was his yearnings for them that he had wished to be cut off from Christ for them, if that were possible. He was like Moses, when he prayed, "If Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book, which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:32).

### Verses 4-5

And what is this people in the purpose of God? What are their possessions and privileges? It is the most favored nation on the earth. "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deuteronomy 4:7). The adoption is theirs, as His family on earth, destined for earthly blessings (Amos 3:2). And God had said, "I am a Father to Israel " and " Israel is my son, my Firstborn." They had the Glory. In visible glory Jehovah dwelt in their midst. While absent now, the promise is, that in the future day of their restoration, that glory will return with the coming of the Lord (Isaiah 4; Ezekiel 43:4). Theirs are also the covenants; they were made with the nation; and the giving of the law. Furthermore, theirs is the service of God, that divinely instituted levitical ritual, so full of blessed and prophetic meaning. All other rituals are unauthorized counterfeits. They also have the promises. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, He, who is God over all blessed forever. Amen." (More than once the attempt has been made to change those wonderful words, bearing testimony to the Deity of our Lord. The revised version, in its marginal reading, is one of the latest attempts to rob our Lord of this great and true tribute.) And all these great things belong to Israel. They still belong to them. When the time of their national conversion and restoration comes, all these things will be manifested in their fulness, even to a restored, glorious service in the millennial temple (Ezekiel 40-47). And these statements show that the Apostle to the Gentiles did not despise the nation Israel and its privileges.

#### Verses 6-13

Now if the nation as such had failed, as we find later, on account of unbelief, and they were rejected for the present, the Word of God had not failed on that account. If God had called the Gentiles and they received now the blessing of righteousness, it does not mean that the Word of God has come to naught. God's purpose concerning Israel cannot fail. But they prided themselves that they were of the seed of Abraham and therefore exclusively entitled to the promises. "We have Abraham to our father" (Luke 3:8), was their boast, and the Lord had told them "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). They forgot in their blind antagonism to the Gospel that the Scriptures showed that blessing had its source with the choice of God, that blessing is the result of elective mercy and the title to it must be of faith. Divine election is the only ground of blessing. They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. If such were the case, then the children of the flesh, Ishmael and his offspring, were on the same ground with them. There was a promise made "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." In that promised son, in Isaac alone, the seed was called, therefore the children of the promise are counted for the seed. This showed that they had no right to expect Divine blessing simply on the ground of natural descent. And in the choice of Isaac, God's sovereignty and election is seen. They might therefore be Abraham's seed and yet not be Abraham's children; only those that are of faith are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7). The case of Jacob and Esau is next cited. Rebecca was their mother. Before the children were even born, and therefore had done neither good nor evil, to merit anything, it was said unto her, "the elder shall serve the younger." It was so ordered "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth." If they claim and expect blessing merely on the ground of natural descent, then the descendants of Esau, the Edomites, must be admitted to the same blessings with them.\* This they would not admit. Inasmuch as all rests upon God's unconditional election, their objections to the blessing of the Gentiles through the Gospel, God dealing with them in grace, were disproved by their own history. ("Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The love for Jacob was unmerited. "Esau have I hated" stands written at the close of the Old Testament, after the continued wickedness of Edom had been fully demonstrated and merited God's indignation.)

## Verses 14-26

God can choose whom He will. This is His sovereignty. Is then God unrighteous in doing this? God forbid. Two examples of God's sovereignty in mercy and in judgment are given. Had God dealt with Israel according to His righteousness, they would have been cut off. Then the sovereignty of God was displayed and Israel was spared. All rests upon that sovereign mercy--"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." And Pharaoh illustrates God's sovereignty in judgment.

Pharaoh was a wicked, God-hating man. God had shown him mercy, but he hardened his heart and defied the Lord. In arrogant pride he said, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him? I know not Jehovah." Then He hardened his heart and made him a monument of His wrath. "Both were wicked-- Israel and Pharaoh. Righteousness would have condemned both. He has mercy on one, and hardens the other. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens, when simple righteousness would have condemned both.

This is sovereignty. He proves Himself not merely righteous (the day of judgment will prove that), but proves Himself God." But man, the creature of the dust, replies to God and brings his finite thoughts to judge God. The questions in Verse 19 are severely rebuked. What is man that he should speak to his Creator! The thing formed speaks to Him that formed it. "Why hast Thou made us thus?" The potter can take a lump of clay and form out of it two vessels, one unto honor and another unto dishonor.

It is his right. God can do this according to His sovereign will, and none can say, What doest Thou? However, while this is God's right, that He can do so, if He chooses to do it, there is nothing said, that He has done so. "God's sovereignty is the first of all rights, the foundation of all rights, the foundation of all morality. If God is not God, what will He be? The root of the question is this; is God to judge man, or man God? God can do whatsoever He pleases. He is not the object for judgment.

Such is His title: but when in fact the apostle presents the two cases, wrath and grace, he puts the case of God showing long suffering towards one already fitted for wrath, in order to give at last an example to men of His wrath in the execution of His justice; and then of God displaying His glory in vessels of mercy whom He has prepared for glory. There are then these three points established with marvelous exactitude; the power to do all things, no one having the right to say a word; wonderful endurance with the wicked, in whom at length His wrath is manifested; demonstration of His glory in vessels, whom He has Himself prepared by mercy for glory, and whom He has called, whether from among the Jews or Gentiles, according to the declaration of Hosea." (Synopsis by J.N.D.)

The objections which were raised against God's dealings in race with Gentiles are completely met and answered. He calls whom He will and calling the Gentiles and showing them mercy has not cancelled the promises made to Israel.

## Verses 27-29

Now while Grace goes forth to the Gentiles, mercy is also in store for Israel. Ultimately a remnant will be saved--not the whole nation, but a remnant. It refers us to a specific time, "When He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Isaiah 10:22-23). It is a prediction concerning the future. They will, when this age closes, pass through a time of judgment; in that period God in sovereign power and mercy will call a remnant of His people, the remnant so often seen in the prophetic Word and in the Book of Revelation. That remnant will be saved and will

become the nucleus of the coming Kingdom; the unbelieving apostate Israel will be swept away in judgment.

Verses 30-33

The conclusion of this intensely interesting and often misunderstood chapter puts before us the fact of God's merciful dealings with Gentiles and Israel 's failure. The Gentiles, who did not follow after righteousness, have attained to the righteousness, which is of faith. They believe the Gospel and enjoy the blessings of the Gospel. Israel failed. Why? They sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, the way of failure and death. They rejected the principle of faith, even declared in their own Scriptures, "the just shall live by faith." They stumbled at the stumbling stone (1 Peter 2:8).

2. Israel 's Failure and Unbelief.

## CHAPTER 10

1. Israel 's Condition. 1-4.

2. Righteousness by Works and by Faith. 5-13.

3. The Gospel Published Abroad. 14-17. 4. Israel 's Unbelief. 18-21.

Verses 1-4

For His beloved people Israel the great apostle of the Gentiles prayed to God, that they might be saved. What an example he has given to us believers of the Gentiles. We owe a great debt to Israel; but how little prayer there is among Gentile Christians for the salvation of the Jews! Paul bears witness that they had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Their ignorance consisted in not knowing God's righteousness, that which is found in the first part of the Epistle, seeking therefore to establish their own righteousness; in doing this, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. They were religious, kept the law outwardly, and Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, they rejected. Alas! The same is still the condition of the Jews.

Verses 5-13

Righteousness by works and by faith is contrasted. Moses, in whom they trusted as their great teacher, describes the righteousness which is of the law in these words, "the man who doeth those things shall live by them." But the righteousness by faith is likewise mentioned by Moses; but for the Holy Spirit calling attention to it in this passage, it would never have been known. Deuteronomy 30, where these words are found, speaks of the time, when Israel in a world-wide dispersion, will return with the heart to God and when He will have compassion upon them. Then their heart will be circumcised and grace will be manifested towards them. Driven out of the land for having broken the law, they will hearken to the Word and obey in faith.

"The Apostle therefore quotes such terms as exclude 'doing' on the part of man. Righteousness springs out of the finished work of Christ (verses 3, 4), and there can be no 'finished' work while man is endeavoring to be saved by law, for this would be virtually to undo what Christ has done. That which would be impossible to man, God has already done in Christ. All the 'doing' required by the law, has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and everything that is required now from men is to believe what Christ has

done. Christ has neither to be brought down from heaven, nor to be raised again from the dead; everything has been accomplished, and all that is left is to accept in trustful thankfulness. Faith has not to acquire or Win a Saviour, but to accept One Who has already accomplished the work of redemption. God's righteousness is not distant and difficult, but near and easy" (Professor W.A. Griffith Thomas).

And this word, which is nigh, the Apostle saith "is the word of faith which we preach." And this it is "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." How blessedly simple all this is. Jesus must be owned as Lord; He, who died for our sins, and whom God raised from the dead. Blessed assurance, "thou shalt be saved!" Saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

"Moreover, this faith is manifested by the proof it gives of its sincerity--by confession of the name of Christ. If some One were convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and refused to confess Him, his conviction would evidently be his greater condemnation. The faith of the heart produces the confession of the mouth; the confession of the mouth is the counterproof of the sincerity of the faith, and of honesty, in the sense of the claim which the Lord has upon us in grace. It is the testimony which God requires at the outset. It is to sound the trumpet on earth in face of the enemy. It is to say that Christ has conquered, and that everything belongs in right to Him. It is a confession which brings in God in answer to the name of Jesus. It is not that which brings in righteousness, but it is the public acknowledgment of Christ, and thus gives expression to the faith by which there is participation in the righteousness of God, so that it may be Said, 'He believes in Christ unto salvation; he has the faith that justifies.'"

Then twice the word "Whosoever" is mentioned, that Precious Gospel word, which includes all, Jews and Gentiles, for there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, for the same Lord over all is such unto all that call upon Him. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). All proves that righteousness is by faith and is offered to all. The statement in Joel also refers to a future day in connection with the coming deliverance of the remnant and the coming of the Lord.

#### Verses 14-17

And this good news for Jews and Gentiles must be proclaimed, for how can they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent? Of such a gracious world-wide mission the law had nothing to say. Its message and the promises were confined to the nation Israel. The Lord Jesus as the minister of the circumcision sent His messengers only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10); but after His death and resurrection He gave the commission "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). And the Lord sends forth His messengers; even so it was written before in Isaiah 52:7. (A careful study of this passage and the context shows its future meaning likewise, at the time, when the Lord reigneth, "when the Lord shall bring again Zion,") All is of Him, the righteousness, the salvation as well as the proclamation. But not all obeyed the gospel, nor do all obey the gospel call now. This also was foretold by Isaiah, in the great chapter (53) in which Israel 's rejection of the Messiah is foretold, as well as the future confession of that rejection. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Verses 18-21.-- Israel is unbelieving. They heard and believed not. The law and the prophets had borne witness to the fact that the Gentiles would believe (Deuteronomy 32:21; Isaiah 65:1). And in infinite

patience and longsuffering the Lord had stretched forth His hands unto Israel as a disobedient and gainsaying people. They were unbelieving and set aside. Their future restoration is the theme of the next chapter.

Israel 's Restoration.

## CHAPTER 11

("The Jewish Question", by A. C. G., gives a complete exposition of this great chapter.)

1. God Hath not Cast Away His People. 1.
2. Israel 's Apostasy not Complete; a Remnant Saved. 2-6.
3. Israel 's Blindness for a Season. 7-10.
4. To Provoke Them to Jealousy. 11.
5. Their Fulness and Reception Life from the Dead. 12-15.
6. The Parable of the Two Olive Trees. 16-24.
7. A Mystery Made Known. All Israel Saved. 25-32. 8. The Doxology. 33-36.

### Verse 1

In view of the preceding chapter on Israel 's rejection, the question is asked "Hath God cast away His People?" Is there nothing more in store for national Israel ? God forbid. If it were so, God's gifts and calling would be subject to repentance and He would not be the faithful, covenant-keeping God. He foreknew His people Israel and that foreknowledge embraced all their sad history of failure and apostasy. The Apostle Paul speaks of himself as an Israelite of the seed of Abraham. He demonstrates in his own experience the fact that God hath not cast away His people. Hating Christ, having zeal for God without knowledge, a persecutor of the church, he had obtained mercy that in him Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him (1 Timothy 1:16). His unique conversion must be looked upon as a prophetic type of the conversion of the remnant of Israel, when the Lord comes. As Saul of Tarsus saw Him in the glory-light, so the Israel living in the day of the second Coming of Christ will behold Him (Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7). This vision will result in their national conversion.

### Verses 2-6

The time of Elias was one of the darkest Periods of their history. it seemed as if the whole nation had apostatized from God. Elias had this conception when he complained in his despondency. "They have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." The Lord told him then that there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. The apostasy of Israel was not a complete apostasy. The Lord had preserved a faithful remnant. Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. In the beginning of this present age there was in existence a distinctive Jewish remnant. This Jewish-Christian remnant in the beginning of the dispensation was an evidence that God had not cast away His people. A similar remnant of believing Jews will be called for a definite work and testimony during the end of the age. And throughout this Christian

dispensation it has been abundantly demonstrated that God has not cast away His ancient people, for thousands of them have been saved by grace and have become members of the body of Christ.

#### Verses 7-10

When the apostle speaks here of the election he has in view the believing part of the nation at all times, the remnant past, the future remnant and all those who believe in Christ now. When he speaks of the rest being blinded he means the unbelieving part of the nation. Judicial blindness has come upon them for their unbelief. Three quotations are given from the Old Testament showing that the Lord foreknew their unbelief and predicted the judgment which was to come upon the nation (Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10 and Psalm 69:22-24). A careful study of these chapters will show that the threatened judgments and the judicial blindness are not permanent. All the Prophets and many of the prophetic Psalms reveal the fact that the judgments which have come upon the people are for a season only and that there is glory and blessing in store for them. The curses pronounced upon them have found their literal fulfillment; the unfulfilled promises of blessing and glory will also be literally fulfilled and Israel will be saved and restored to their land.

#### Verse 11

The setting aside of Israel is not final; their present blindness is not their permanent condition. But have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. They stumbled over Him in whom they saw no beauty and whom they did not desire. They received Him not, who had come to His own. But this did not result in their complete fall. God in His infinite wisdom and all-wise purpose brought by their fall salvation to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. In this statement we see again that God has not cast away His people Israel. If He had cast them away, why should He wish to provoke them to jealousy? And this provoking to jealousy is with the intent that some of them might be saved (verse 14).

#### Verses 12-15

And now the Apostle of the Gentiles addresses us Gentiles. "I speak to you Gentiles." It is a message of much importance. The fall of Israel was the riches of the world, the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles (verse 13); the casting away was the reconciling of the world. Thus blessing, great blessing came to the Gentiles by Israel's unbelief and fall. But this is not all. All this is far from accomplishing the promise made to the father of the nation, when God said to Abraham "In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blest." Israel's fall, the means in God's purpose to bring salvation to the Gentiles, is not the final thing, and the blessings the Gentiles received by their fall is not the fullest blessing which God has in store for the world. Much more is in store for the world in blessing through Israel's restoration. To Israel is promised in the Old Testament a time of fulness, a time when they shall be taken back. Their time of fulness comes when Christ returns in power and in glory. If then God brought blessing to the Gentiles by their fall, how far greater will be the blessings for the world, when their time of fulness has come. It will be life from the dead. Israel is now nationally and spiritually dead. They will be nationally and spiritually made alive (see Ezekiel 37:1-17, 39:25-29; Hosea 5:15-6:5). And the whole world comes in for blessing then. The nations will be converted and the kingdom will be set up on earth (see Zechariah 2:10-18).

#### Verses 16-24

The parable of the two olive trees illustrates great dispensational facts and contains solemn warnings for Christendom. The good olive tree typifies Israel in covenant relation with God in the Abrahamic covenant.

The olive tree is evergreen; and so is the covenant, unchangeable. Israel 's faithlessness and disobedience cannot annul it. The root is Abraham, who was holy, separated unto God. On account of unbelief some of the branches were broken off. They are now separated from the good olive tree and are withered. The wild olive tree is a picture of the Gentiles. The branches of this wild olive tree are grafted among the branches of the good olive tree to partake of the root and fatness of the good olive tree. The wild olive tree branches grafted upon the good olive tree do not represent the true church. The Gentiles are meant by it, who are, after Israel 's unbelief, put upon the ground of responsibility which Israel had, to partake now of the promised covenant blessings. The grafted in branches represent the Christian profession, Christendom, as we call it. The grafted in branches are solemnly warned. They are not to boast, not to be high-minded; they must abide in goodness. If the warning is unheeded they will not be spared but cut off. And when that happens God will graft in again the natural branches into their own olive tree if they no longer abide in unbelief. God is able to do this. He can and will put back Israel into their former relation. It is prophetic. Christendom is exactly that which is here warned against--boasting, high-minded, not abiding in goodness, in one word, apostate. The unbelief and failure of professing Christendom is as great, if not greater than the unbelief and failure of Israel. The time will come when God will not spare, but execute judgment upon Christendom. He will spew Laodicea out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16). Then the hour of Israel 's restoration has come.

Verses 25-32

A mystery is made known. Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. The fulness of the Gentiles means, the full number of the saved, gathered out from among the Gentiles, who constitute the church, the body of Christ. And when the body is joined to the Head in glory, the time of the coming of the Lord for His Saints (1 Thessalonians 4:17), the Lord will turn again to Israel. All Israel, that is, the all Israel living in the day will be saved, when the Deliverer comes out of Zion (Isaiah 59:20; Psalm 14:7). It is the second, visible, personal and glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob and take away their sins. Between the coming of the Lord for the Saints, who will meet Him in the air, and His coming in great power and glory, are the days of Jacob's trouble, when the nation will have to pass through the fires of tribulation and the wicked among Israel will be cut off. And after He has come and has taken away their sins, all the great prophecies of Israel 's earthly glory will be fulfilled. Verses 33-36.--A doxology closes this dispensational section of the epistle. What depths of riches, both of wisdom and knowledge of God, in His merciful dealings with the Gentiles and the Jews! How unsearchable His judgments! How untraceable His ways! For of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen.

III. EXHORTATIONS AND THE CONCLUSION. Chapters 12-16.

CHAPTER 12

1. The Body as a Willing Sacrifice. 1-2.
2. Service. 3-8.
3. The Daily Walk in Holiness. 9-21.

Verses 1-2.

Grace calls for obedience. After God has made known the riches of His grace, the fulness of the Gospel, His Spirit shows how believers should walk in a world of sin and tribulation. The first thing is to present the body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This connects with the truth of chapter 6:19, "yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." "The body is the instrument of the spirit; and this so completely, that, if it be laid hold for Him, there is no part of the practical life but must, of necessity, be His. The feet are used to walk at His bidding, the hands to employ ourselves in His things, the tongue to speak for Him and nothing else, the ear to hear His words; the eye also, so that whatever it looks upon, it will look upon as being under His control" (Numerical Bible). It is plain that the whole life thus finds its government." And this yielding of the body, giving it as a living sacrifice, is our intelligent service. It is the needful thing so that all which is written in the sixth chapter may become a practical thing in our lives. Is this presentation of the body as a living sacrifice an act done once for all (as some teach), or is it a daily yielding? It must be done continually. And it becomes possible to go on presenting the body thus, under all circumstances, if we remember the mercies of God, what God in Christ has done for us and in what a wonderful position He has put us in His own Son. But it needs constant watchfulness, prayer, meditation on the Word and self-judgment.

In doing this the believer will be able to carry out the exhortation, "be not conformed to this world (age)." A soul in touch with Christ, knowing the mercies of God in redemption, cannot enjoy the world. Well has it been said "true joy in the Lord renders the soul in which it dwells incapable of enjoying what the world esteems pleasure. Natural pleasures are the solace of that which is essentially alien of God." The present age is evil and Christ died to deliver us from this present evil age. Satan is the god of this age. It is not controlled by the Spirit of God. Therefore friendship with the world, conformity to it, is enmity to the cross of Christ. Separation from it is God's demand, for the cross of Christ has made us dead to the world and the world dead unto us. We must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This is the work of the Spirit of God in us. The inward man is to be renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16); and this will be so as we daily present our bodies as the living sacrifice.

#### Verses 3-8

Service is mentioned next. This is to be rendered in humility and according to the measure of faith as God has dealt to every man, who is a believer. Here the body, that is, the church, is touched upon. In first Corinthians and Ephesians the truth concerning the church and the different gifts is more fully revealed. All believers are members of that body, and as in the human body not all members have the same office, so in the one body there are different gifts bestowed by grace. Each must take his place given to him in that body and render the service unto which he is called and thus demonstrate the divine truth, that we are one body in Christ, and individually members one of the other. Ministry in the Word stands first and there is also ministry in other ways. The latter are, giving, ruling (or leading) and showing mercy. Giving is to be in simplicity (or liberality); ruling is to be in diligence and showing mercy in cheerfulness. The emphasis here is not so much upon the different gifts as it is upon the faithful exercise of the gift.

#### Verses 9-21

The daily walk in holiness is unfolded in these verses. These are precious exhortations and every Christian should read them often and order his daily life accordingly. Love stands first, for it is the great essential of the divine nature. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16). It is to be unfeigned. Love seeketh not her own and therefore we are to prefer in honor one another. "Not slothful in business" is often misunderstood and many have thought it means devotion to a secular

business. But the correct translation is, "In diligence, not slothful." Then there is rejoicing in hope, patience in suffering, prayer, sympathy with others and many other blessed things into which we cannot enter in detail. The child of God desires all these things and the Spirit of God is with us to produce these blessed fruits in our lives.

## CHAPTER 13

1. Obedience to Authorities. 1-7.
2. Love the Fulfilling of the Law. 8-10.
3. The Day is at Hand. 11-14.

### Verses 1-7

The children of God are strangers and pilgrims in the world. Our citizenship is in heaven. But what is the Christian to do as living under different forms of government? The Christian is to be in subjection to these, for the powers that exist are ordained by Him. Resisting these powers would mean resistance to God who has ordained them. They are God's ministers to maintain order. "Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." If Christians had always obeyed these injunctions, how well it would have been. But often they are forgotten and an attempt is made to control the politics of this age and to rule.

### Verses 8-10

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." The first sentence does not mean that it is wrong to borrow money. The question is about paying. If a debt is due it should be paid exactly on time. Borrowing money in a reckless way, without any prospect of returning the amount, is sinful, and often great dishonor has been brought upon the name of our Lord on account of it. But there is another debt which always remains. The Christian owes the debt of love to all. And this love is the fulfilling of the law. Love does not work ill to his neighbor. The natural man may claim that he keeps the sum of the other commandments, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but he cannot do it. Only one who is born again, in whose heart there is love, has the power to do this.

### Verses 11-14

The Coming of the Lord is brought before us in these verses as a motive to holy living. The final salvation is nearing, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. The blessed hope is to be always before the Christian's heart; it is a purifying hope. "He that hath this hope set upon him purifieth himself as He is pure." In view of that approaching day, when we shall see Him face to face and be with Him in glory, the exhortations are given to awake out of sleep, to cast off the works of darkness, to put on the armor of light, to walk becomingly as in the day, to abstain from the things of the flesh, putting on the Lord Jesus and making no provisions for the flesh. We are to walk in the light as the children of the day, with faces set towards the coming glory. And never before were those exhortations more needed than now. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The signs of the end of the age are seen everywhere, and yet in these solemn days how few of God's people walk as the children of the day in the path of separation.

## CHAPTER 14

1. Strong and Weak Brethren are the Lord's Servants. 1-12.

2. The True Way of Love. 13-23.

Verses 1-12

The question concerning brethren who were weak in faith, how they are to be treated by those who are strong is now taken up. Those weak in the faith had not the complete knowledge of their position in Christ, though they knew Christ and loved Him. They did not realize that certain observances of days, or abstinences from meats and drinks, could not affect their salvation in any way. There were scruples and conscientious difficulties, as there are still among God's people. One believeth he may eat all things, he knew his full Christian freedom--another who is weak eateth herbs. How are these two to treat each other? Were they to criticize and condemn one the other? "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him." The weak in faith are to be received, but not to doubtful points of reasonings; these questions are not to be brought up for discussion, or worse, to make them a test of Christian fellowship. Judging a brother, or condemning him on such matters is forbidden, for inasmuch as God hath received him, he is the Lord's servant and not ours. The rebuke is "who art thou that thou judgest another's servant? to his own Lord he standeth or falleth." More than that, the Lord in His gracious power shall keep him in all his weakness. He bears with him, "the Lord is able to make him stand." Each is responsible to the Lord. Each does it as unto the Lord. No one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself, we are all the Lord's. There is also a day coming when we all must stand before His judgment seat and then He will judge, who knows the secrets of every heart. Therefore we must not judge. Every one, as stated in all these cases, should be fully persuaded in his own mind and should not judge another, but look forward to the judgment seat of Christ.

Verses 13-23

But more than that there should be loving tolerance for the brother. let the harsh judgment of the brother, whom God has received be abandoned; but judge this rather, "not to put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." There is nothing unclean in itself. Yet a brother may account something unclean, his conscience so judges, then it is unclean for him. The brother with the weak conscience must be considered. The law of love demands this. "If thy brother is grieved on account of thy food, thou walkest no longer in love; destroy not with thy food him for whom Christ died." Therefore "it is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything, whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak." "He that serves Christ in these things is acceptable and approved of men. We are to follow what makes for peace and edifies others. To the pure all things are pure; but if a person defiles his conscience, even though an unfounded scruple, to him it is unclean. Happy for him who, in boasting of his liberty by faith, does not go beyond his faith in what he does; and does not offend in what he allows himself to do; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. If a man thinks he ought to honor a certain day, or abstain from a certain food, and then, for the sake of showing his liberty, does not do it, to him it is sin. It is not faith before God" (Synopsis).

CHAPTER 15

1. The Example of Christ. 1-7.

2. The Ministry of Christ. 8-13.

### 3. Paul's Personal Ministry. 14-33.

#### Verses 1-7

An additional motive is brought in why the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak and not please themselves. It is Christ. He did not please Himself, but bore in great meekness and patience the reproaches with which men reproached God, and these reproaches fell on Christ Himself. It was the reproach of God He bore in perfect meekness. We are therefore to be likeminded one to another according to Christ Jesus. Wherefore receive ye one another even as Christ also received you to the glory of God. We have then three instructions concerning the weak brother: 1. To receive the weak, but not to doubtful disputations. 2. Not to judge a brother in those things, because he is Christ's servant, and any one must give an account of himself. 3. To bear the infirmities of the weak, to put no stumbling block in their way, not to please ourselves. We are to walk in love and manifest that love by receiving one another as Christ has received us to the glory of God. And blessed are we if we also walk according to those rules and manifest the mind of Christ.

#### Verses 8-13

The exhortations are ended, and what we find in the rest of this chapter is supplementary to the whole Epistle and touches once more on the question concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. Christ was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises to the fathers. Thus He appeared in the midst of His people. But the Gentiles also were to receive mercy through Him. Four Scriptures are quoted to prove that it is the purpose of God to bless the Gentiles in mercy with His people Israel (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43 in Moses' great prophetic song; Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10). But it must not be overlooked that these quotations do not teach that Gentiles are as fellow heirs put into the same body with believing Jews. They show that God had announced that Gentiles would rejoice in salvation and trust in Christ. The fulfillment of the passages quoted awaits the second coming of our Lord "when He shall rise to reign over the Gentiles," when Gentiles will rejoice with the saved remnant of Israel. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." This is our most blessed inheritance. The Holy Spirit indwells the child of God and in believing He manifests His power, the God of hope filling us with all joy and peace, so that we abound in hope, looking forward to that blessed day, the realization of our blessed Hope, when we shall be like Him and see Him as He is.

#### Verses 14-33

Then the great man of God speaks lastly of his own ministry. Much might be written on this interesting paragraph. He had a special ministry conferred upon Himself. It was grace which had given it to him. His ministry he describes as being "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." A closer study of his statements, which tell of his humility, his marvelous service in power, his confidence, as well as other things, will be found helpful and instructive. He looked forward to his coming visit to Rome and requested the prayers of the brethren. And when he came there at last, he came as the prisoner of the Lord, and from Rome he sent forth the greatest of his Epistles.

## CHAPTER 16

### 1. Greetings to Individuals. 1-16.

2. Warning and Comfort. 17-20.

3. The Final Salutations. 21-24.

4. The Conclusion. 25-27.

Verses 1-16

Phoebe (which means "radiant") is first mentioned. She was probably a person of great influence and wealth, for she had been a succorer of many, including the Apostle. She is heartily commended to the assembly in Rome, to be received in the Lord, worthily of the Saints. Then that interesting pair of fellow workers of the Apostle Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, are saluted. To follow their wanderings and interest in the Gospel we have to omit here; see Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19. At what time they laid down their necks for the life of the Apostle we do not know. The assembly met in their house. Then the first convert of the province of Asia, the beloved Epaphroditus is greeted. Many, who had labored much; Andronicus and Junius, who were in the Lord before Paul, and others are greeted. Little do we know of all these names, but their records are on high and at the judgment seat of Christ they and their abundant labors and sufferings will be made manifest.

(Not till the third century have we any proofs of the existence of buildings set apart for Christian worship. Not only were most of the churches too poor to build meeting-places, but, until \*Christianity became the religion of the empire, the privacy and secrecy possible in a meeting held in a dwelling-house were important considerations. The wealthier members of a church seem to have put one of their rooms at the disposal of the brethren for this purpose. First comes the Upper Room, in which our Lord held his Last Supper with his disciples (Matthew 26:18), and then the house of Mary in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), although this may have been the same place. In Ephesus the house of Aquila and Priscilla was a meeting-place (1 Corinthians 16:19), as it was in Rome also. At Laodicea the church met in the house of Nymphas (Colossians 4:15), and at Colosse in the house of Philemon (verse 2). Although there may have been in Rome one house in which the whole body of Christians met, yet it would seem that it was usual to hold meetings in a number of houses. The phrases, "and the brethren that are with them" (verse 14), and "all the saints that are with them" (15), seem to imply separate groups of believers.--A.E. Garvie.)

Verses 17-20

There is a warning against those who create divisions and give occasions to stumbling, contrary to the doctrine they had learned. These were probably teachers like those who disturbed the Galatians and these teachers were to be shunned--"turn away from them." To create divisions in the body of Christ is a work of the flesh and a serious matter. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by kind and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the guileless." How often this is the case with false teachers in our own times. Destructive critics, false teachers, deniers of the Gospel of Grace are often in character very amiable and kind. Such is especially true of Christian Science with their leaders; the blasphemies of that cult are generally covered up by kind and fair speeches. And Satan, who is behind all these things, will shortly be bruised under the feet of His people. Complete victory over all evil is promised for His people and will surely come.

Verses 21-27

And now the final salutations and the conclusion in praise. "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

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